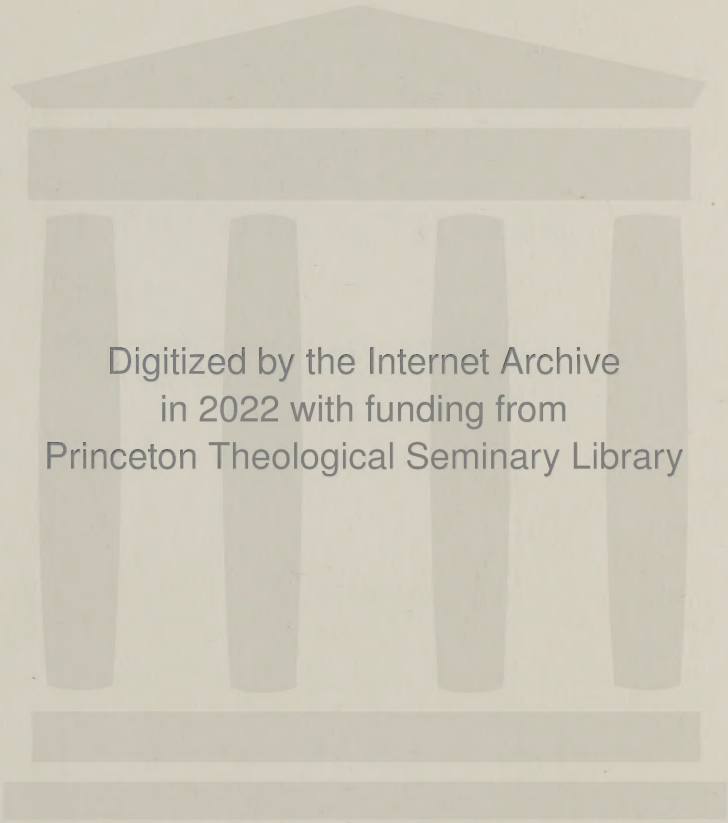
Library of the Theological Seminary

PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY

Gift of
Robert L. and Alexander Stuart
1855

BT101 .T4 1855
Thompson, Robert Anchor, 1821-1894.
Christian theism: The testimony of reaso
revelation to the existence and character


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

https://archive.org/details/christiantheismt01thom

CHRISTIAN THEISM:

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON AND REVELATION
TO THE EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER OF
THE SUPREME BEING.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

CHRISTIAN THEISM:

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON AND REVELATION
TO THE EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER OF
THE SUPREME BEING.

BY

ROBERT ANCHOR THOMPSON, M.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE SUPREME BEING.

Μία μὲν οὖν ἡ τῆς ἀλήθειας ὁδὸς, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὴν καθάπερ εἰς ἀέννaον ποταμὸν ἐκρέουσι τὰ ῥεῖθρα ἄλλα ἄλλοθεν.

LONDON:
RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE.
1855.

(*The Author reserves the right of Translation.*)

PREFACE.

A GENTLEMAN of Aberdeen, who died in 1784, left, besides numerous munificent bequests to local charities, a fund to be applied every forty years to the foundation of premiums, open to public competition, for the encouragement of writings on the subject of the present Treatise. He expressly requests that his name may not be mentioned in the public announcements of the competition. But it was impossible that it should remain unknown; and one of the successful treatises published in 1816, contains a notice of his life and character.

He was a merchant of liberal education, enterprising, honourable, and successful; but was one of those minds of higher order, always to be found among the merchants of Britain, who do not think it the only, nor the first purpose of life to amass a fortune. Deeply impressed

with the truth of a future life, and with a feeling of its supreme importance, he showed, not only by posthumous benevolence, of which examples are to be found in men who have been sordid and selfish, but much more in the whole conduct of his life, that he had a clear view of the practical character of true religion, and hoped, by conformity to the great law of love to God and man, to be fitted for a better existence hereafter.

Though without family of his own, he felt bound to transmit to his heirs a fortune equal to that which he had inherited. His gains in trade he devoted, in his lifetime and by his will, to charitable purposes. The estate from which the premiums and other bequests are paid, was set apart by him with this intention in 1774, ten years before his death, and when he was only forty-five years of age. During his lifetime, numbers of aged and sick poor were dependent upon his beneficence; and he left a sum of money in charge of the synod of Aberdeen, for the support of bed-ridden and diseased persons. He also provided for the extension of vaccination (then inoculation) in Aberdeen; for the support of a Chaplain for poor persons in the Jail; for the comfortable maintenance of pauper lunatics, and for whatever appeared to

him to be, at that time, the most urgent wants of the municipal institutions of Aberdeen. He thus proved by his piety, his integrity, and his charity, that he was actuated by the spirit of practical Christianity.

He appears, however, to have been unable to attach himself to any particular religious community. It remains on record, in his own words; "I have not been able to join in public worship, as I could not declare a conviction of the whole of what is professed." But, although it is not known what may have been his difficulties, it is evident, from other passages, written at the same time, that he sincerely believed the chief Christian doctrines, and was deeply affected with a sense of their importance.

His sensitive conscientiousness is shown by a well-authenticated tradition, that when a mercantile adventure turned out more profitable than he considered fair and just in proportion to his outlay, he frequently insisted on sharing his unexpected profits with those from whom he had purchased. When asked if he thought his correspondents would have dealt as liberally with him, if his bargain had proved unfavourable; his reply was,—"With the conduct of others I have nothing to do. It is my duty to regulate my

own by the rules of equity as they appear to me[1]."

It may be interesting to add some short extracts from the deed of settlement of the estate from which the Theological prize fund is drawn. They will show especially his anxiety for the success of his scheme. He says:—

"Whereas I am highly sensible of the value of every action in any degree acceptable in the sight of Almighty God; and being also sensible of the transitoriness of this life, and of the importance of our situation in a future state; . . . I did in the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Eight, resolve to set aside a part of what Providence had, in very great bounty, given me by trade, for charitable purposes, and to bestow the produce thereof in that manner during my lifetime, and to settle the same to be applied to pious and charitable purposes after my death; in hopes that, after destinating such share of my substance to my relations and connexions, as different circumstances seem to make proper, that the overplus of what it has pleased Providence to bestow on me by trade, would be used so as that I might humbly hope it would be

[1] Dr. Brown's Essay, p. xxii.

approved of by that Great and Good Being Who has bestowed it on me."

He then appoints a sum of not less than sixteen hundred pounds to be applied every forty years to the foundation of two premiums; three-fourths thereof to be given to the person who shall write and lay before the judges, appointed as he directs, the treatise which shall be judged by them to have the most merit; the remaining fourth to the writer of the treatise which shall be judged by them next in merit to the former; the subject to be, upon the evidence:—

"That there is a Being all-powerful, wise, and good, by Whom every thing exists; and as the power of the Deity is easily shown, in pointing out the considerations particularly, by which, notwithstanding the pains we are often subject to, we may hope and trust in the goodness of the Deity, both in this state and in the reasonable expectation of a future one; and in taking notice of the comforts arising to mankind from these considerations independent of Revelation; and farther, in considering these doctrines as confirmed by the Blessed Jesus as sent by God."

A codicil added in the year of his death somewhat changes the form of the thesis, and requests that it may stand as follows:—

"That there is a Being, all-powerful, wise, and good, by Whom every thing exists: and particularly to obviate difficulties regarding the Wisdom and Goodness of the Deity; and this, in the first place, from considerations independent of written Revelation; and, in the second place, from the Revelation of the Lord Jesus; and, from the whole, to point out the inferences most necessary for, and useful to mankind."

"I am very desirous," he adds, "to declare, that I humbly adore the Divine intentions, in the mission of the Lord Jesus, His Sufferings, and bitter Death: and which, we are taught, were a proper means, in the Divine Wisdom, for the forgiveness of sins, and conferring other benefits on mankind; humbly adopting the Divine intentions, so far as I understand them, praying to be more enlightened. I see it a great duty to be deeply impressed with the inexpressible Love of our Lord Jesus to mankind, and with a sense of the invaluable benefits they receive by Him.

"The striking attention of Providence through nature, in its mighty and minute branches, with other numerous evidences, probably give proofs of the Attributes of the Deity. Some unhappily do not acknowledge Revelation, and think all is doubtful. To such, considerations independent

of Revelation are necessary. To bring them to the conviction of a Deity is of the utmost consequence, and a step to a belief in Revelation. The considerations on the subject may be beneficial to all."

The deed empowers the ministers of the Established Church of Aberdeen, the Principals and Professors of King's and Marischal Colleges, Aberdeen, and the Trustees of the Testator, to elect and appoint three persons, whom they, in their consciences, shall think to be best qualified to be judges, either from among themselves or otherwise, for determining upon the merits of any treatises which may be laid before them. The judges are required to make a public and solemn declaration, that they will give their judgments and opinions without partiality, and agreeably to the intention of the testator. They are to decide either unanimously, or by plurality of votes, and in case of all three differing from one another, other judges are to be appointed. If unanimous, they may find that none of the treatises produced have sufficient merit to be entitled to the premiums.

In accordance with these dispositions, the term for the first competition on this foundation expired on Jan. 1st, 1814; and on the 4th of

August, 1815, the prizes were adjudged to the treatise entitled "An Essay on the Existence of a Supreme Creator," by Dr. William Lawrence Brown, Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, and that entitled "Records of Creation," by the Rev. John Bird Sumner, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

The second competition, of which the term expired on Jan. 1st, 1854, had been announced during several years previously. Besides the above particulars, the advertisement states the whole amount of the fund to be, on this occasion, about 2400*l.*; and continues:—

"The Trustees, deeply sensible of the importance of the Founder's design, and anxious, as far as lies in them, to do full justice to his wishes, venture to give an assurance, that, in appointing the Judges at the proper time, nothing will be regarded but that eminence of character and qualification which shall secure a satisfactory decision.

"As it tends much to an impartial decision that the names of the Authors should be concealed from the Judges, the Trustees request that the Treatises may not be in the handwriting of their respective Authors, nor have their names annexed to them. Each Treatise must be dis-

tinguished by a peculiar motto; this motto must be written on the outside of a sealed letter, containing the Author's name and his address, and sent along with his performance. The names of the successful candidates only shall be known by opening their letters. The other letters shall be destroyed unopened."

On this occasion 208 Treatises were delivered to the Trustees. On the appointment of the Judges it may be said, without assumption, that it proved the anxiety of the Trustees to do justice to the Founder's intentions, and "to ensure a satisfactory decision."

Notwithstanding the large number of Treatises to be examined, the Judges completed their labours in about a year. The following is a copy of their Report:—

"*Report of the Judges.*

"We, the Judges appointed for the Burnett prizes, in reporting to the Trustees the result at which we have arrived, feel it necessary first to state that, after giving careful examination to the whole of the Treatises sent in, we have found considerable difficulty in coming to a decision, not on account of any difference of opinion among ourselves, but on account of the very near

approach to equality of merit in a considerable number of the Treatises.

"We should have been glad to find that there had been two Treatises so incontestably superior to the rest as to release us from all hesitation. Still, though there is no Essay which, in our judgment, is not greatly capable of improvement, by omission or alteration (which we mention with reference to the future publication of such Essays), we are unanimously of opinion that there are *three* which stand, by an appreciable interval, in advance of the rest, viz. :—

"(No. 143, in Mr. Webster's list.)—'Christian Theism.' Motto, Τὸ ἀγαθὸν τῶν μὲν εὖ ἐχόντων αἴτιον τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἀναίτιον. (2 vols.)

"(No. 141, *ibid.*)—'Theism,' &c. Motto, ζητεῖν τὸν Κύριον κ. τ. λ.—Acts xvii. 27. (1 vol. bound.)

"(No. 1, *ibid.*)—'The Witness of God, or, the Evidence of his Being and Perfections.' Motto, οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἑαυτὸν ἀφῆκεν.—Acts xiv. 17.—'Ask now the beasts, &c.' Job xii. 7. (2 vols.)

"We are also of opinion, that of these, *No.* 143, '*Christian Theism*,' &c., deserves the first place, and therefore to it we adjudge the first prize.

"As to the other two, we find much greater difficulty in deciding which of them should be

preferred. If the Trust Deed left a choice to the Judges in this matter, we should have awarded them *equal*. But as this does not appear to be the case, we deem it necessary to state that *two of our number* are disposed to assign a certain preference to *No.* 141, and that the third acquiesces in that judgment, since at the utmost he would have been disposed only to place them equal.

"And further, in compliance with a wish expressed by the Trustees (in a minute communicated by Mr. Webster), we beg to add that several other Treatises appeared to us to possess considerable merit, (though requiring extensive alteration and careful revision,) more particularly the following (placed, *not* in order of merit, but of the numbers in Mr. Webster's list), viz.:—

"(No. 72.)—'Of Providence, Material and Moral.' Motto, 'Ignotus.' (In 6 vols.)

"(No. 81.)—'Evidence for the Being, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God. Motto, 'Nulla gens est tam barbara,' &c.—*Cic.* (3 vols. bound.)

"(No. 84.)—'On the Evidence that there is a Being, All-powerful,' &c. Motto, οὐ δοκεῖν ἄριστον ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλω. (2 vols.)

"(No. 125.)—'The Anthem of Creation,' &c. Motto, μέγας ἐν τούτοις Θεός. (3 vols. bound.)

"(No. 183.)—'On Natural Theology.' Motto, 'Alpha and Omega.' (2 vols.)

"Also, among the smaller Essays, some, though not competing with the above mentioned, appear to us of a kind likely to be useful, subject to the same remarks, viz.:—

"(No. 117.)—Motto, 'Semper et ubique.'

"(No. 127.)—'On the Existence,' &c. 'Si quod gubernat numen,' &c. 'If there's a Power above us.'

"(No. 206.)—'On the Being, Attributes,' &c. Motto, 'Lebensquelle.'

"(No. 162.)—'The Basis of Truth,' &c.—a fragment, but of great promise.

"(Signed) BADEN POWELL.
HENRY ROGERS.
ISAAC TAYLOR."

This Report was laid before a public meeting of the electors in the Town Hall of Aberdeen, on Jan. 20, 1855, when the sealed envelopes, bearing the titles and mottos of the treatises 143 and 141 were produced by the Trustees, and the first prize was adjudged to the present Treatise, the second to the Rev. John Tulloch, Manse of Kettins, Coupar Angus, now Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrew's.

On the following treatise, few preliminary observations are requisite. Though ultimately directed to meet the appointed thesis, it is, in some parts, founded on notes which had been made without this reference, and before I had heard of the expected competition. Under other circumstances, I should have thought it necessary to pay more attention to the works of several eminent writers, both British and Continental, which I have not had the opportunity of examining, as I should have wished, before I had ventured to lay before the public any thoughts of my own upon the subjects of this Essay. Even the works of Sir Wm. Hamilton were unknown to me, till I had begun to write the treatise. It was then too late to study them completely or minutely; but I derived great assistance in some of the following Chapters from the notes and dissertations in the edition of Reid. The references to the "Discussions" of the same illustrious writer have been recently added. They ought to have been more numerous.

I have been careful to mark the instances in which I was conscious of being under obligations to former writers. It will appear, however, that in many cases where similar thoughts have been quoted in the margin, confirmatory

of those advanced in the text, the arguments of the Treatise have not, in fact, been suggested by the passages referred to. The quotations from Leibnitz, Des Cartes, and Malebranche, have all been added since the work was in the hands of the Judges; my previous acquaintance with these writers having been limited to second-hand information.

The Title of the work arose in the course of the inquiry. In the examination of atheistic systems, in the former part, it was found requisite often to use the opposite word *Theism*. In considering the Scriptural Revelation of the Divine Character, it appeared that *the Theism of Christianity* required to be distinguished from mere natural Theism. Hence the Title, *Christian Theism*. The same Title is assumed by a work quoted in the following pages. But it is there misapplied. A system which regards the Saviour of mankind as no more than one of many wise men, who have set forth the worship of the One True God, and the Bible as not superior, in authority, to other books, can have no right to take the name of Christian.

In the opinion of the Judges, that all the Treatises were "greatly capable of improvement," so far as regards the present Treatise, I fully

concur. Since their judgment was given, it has undergone a thorough revision, and now more nearly approaches to what I should have wished it to be, had time permitted, before it was placed in their hands. The alterations, however, are not such as to change, in any respect, the general character of the work. They are nearly all alterations of manner rather than of matter. The chief exception is in Book III., chapters ii. and iii.; the first of which has been considerably enlarged, and the second, on the Plurality of worlds, is entirely new. But even the latter chapter is an expansion of a passage which occurs toward the end of Book II. This addition has been suggested chiefly by the opinion of the Judges, that the physical part of the argument had been too much overlooked. I had passed it over, thinking it had been fully discussed by numerous and more competent writers.

I may also take this opportunity of expressing my obligation to Mr. Rogers for some valuable observations, which have directed my attention to some other topics of the work. But, on the whole, it remains as it was written, a work of solitude, and must have many errors, which need the indulgent consideration of the reader. I hope, however, they are but minor errors, which will

not invalidate the main arguments, nor bring into question any important conclusions. But there are truths, of which the mind may have a deeper conviction, than of any argument by which they can be established.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

BOOK I.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE, AND THEIR MISAPPLICATION IN SYSTEMS OF ATHEISM AND PANTHEISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

		PAGE
1.	The subject is suitable to the human mind	1
2.	Large extent of the subject	3
3.	Systems of atheism	6
4.	Unsatisfactory proofs of natural religion	7
5.	Argument from final causes	10
6.	Progress of natural theology	11
7.	Foundations of natural theology	13

CHAPTER II.

OF TERMS AND METHOD. MODERN SYSTEMS.

1.	The Sacred Name	16
	The word "exist"	17
	Dependent existence	17
	Independent existence	18
	Underived being	ib.

PAGE

2. Question of method 19
3. Cartesian principle 20
4. Conceptions of space and time 21
5. Ontology rests on psychology . . . . ib.
6. Existence of oneself and of the world . . . 23
7. Supposed dangers of speculation 26
8. Modern philosophical systems 29
Locke's system 30
9. Berkeley's idealism 32
10. Hume's scepticism 33
11. Scottish school 35
12. Kant . . . . . ib.
13. Later German systems 39

CHAPTER III.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE.

SECTION I.

FACULTIES OF THE MIND, AND OBVIOUS FACTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

1. The question stated 43
2. Search for an answer in facts of consciousness . 44
3. Perception and action 45
4. The understanding 46
5. The affections 47
6. Perception 49
7. Sensation . . . . . ib.
8. Perception 54
9. The will 58
10. Simple faculties 59

SECTION II.

ORIGIN OF ALL KNOWLEDGE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FACTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS BY THE REASON.

PAGE

11. Knowledge of self and world 60
12. Appeal to common sense 62
13. The mind and the world in mutual relation . . 63
14. Fundamental cognition of power 65
15. Experience. Innate mental powers . . . 66
16. Primary experience 68
17. Who made us thus? 70
18. The reason or intelligence 71
19. All immediate knowledge is relative . . . 74
20. Mediate knowledge of real being 76
21. Course of the inquiry 78

CHAPTER IV.

SPECULATIVE THEORIES OF EXISTENCE.

1. Aim of theories 81
2. Speculative theories 82
3. Theories to be considered 85

SECTION I.

IDEALISM.

4. Account of it 86
5. The mind contributes to all knowledge . . . 87
6. Atheistic form 89
7. Existence of other men 90
8. Kant and Copernicus 92
9. Idealism requires theism 95
10. Berkeley's idealism 96

SECTION II.

MATERIALISM.

PAGE

11. Popular materialism is shallow 99
12. The "System of Nature" 101
13. Mind and matter incommensurable . . . 103
14. Materialism explains nothing 104
15. Systems of materialism. The hylopathian . . 105
    The hylozoic 106
    The homœomerian . . . . . ib.
    The Democritic 107
    The pseudo-stoical, or cosmo-plastic . . . ib.
16. These theories still current 108
17. Theory of development 111
18. "The Vestiges of Creation" 112
19. Philosophy of the theory 116
20. Atheistic material development 118
    Revival of the Stoical system 119
    And of the cosmo-plastic atheism . . . 120
21. Self-creation 121
    The vestiges of Anaximander 122
22. Limitations of the theory 125
23. Retort of idealism 128
24. Monadology. Atheism not always corporeal . 129
25. Immaterial substance 130
26. Monadology 131
27. Creation of matter 133
28. Dynamical theory of perception 134
29. Dynamical theory of existence 135

CHAPTER V.

ATHEISM.

SECTION I.

DOGMATIC OR POSITIVE ATHEISM.

PAGE

1. Assumes fate or chance 137
2. One First Cause or many 138
3. Many primitive substances 140
4. Letters of the Iliad 143

SECTION II.

SCEPTICAL OR NEGATIVE ATHEISM.

5. Believes in science 147
6. Its vain pretensions 149
7. Its deficiencies 152
8. Scepticism professes humility 154
9. But not consistently 156
10. Becomes dogmatic 157
11. Reason looks beyond the relative 160

CHAPTER VI.

PANTHEISM.

1. Pantheism and atheism 163
2. Systems of pantheism 164

SECTION I.

PHYSICAL PANTHEISM.

3. Soul of the world 165
4. Modern spiritualism 166
5. Odyle 168
6. Remarks on this pantheism 169

SECTION II.

INTELLECTUAL PANTHEISM.

PAGE

7. Account of it 173
8. Spinoza's pantheism 175
9. Examination of Spinoza's system 176
   Assumed impossibility of creation . . . 178
   Only one substance 179
10. Spinoza's fatalism 181
11. Is Spinozism atheistic? 183
12. Ethics of the system 187
13. Its false pretences 191

SECTION III.

SEMI-PANTHEISM.

14. Its doctrine 193
15. Divine fatalism 194
   Moral necessity 195
16. Is human necessity pantheistic? 196
17. Coexistence of finite and infinite 199
18. Of transient causes with the Divine presence . 200
19. Of Divine sovereignty with freedom and prayer . 201
20. Evil inconsistent with pantheism 203

BOOK II.

THE DIRECT EVIDENCES OF NATURAL THEISM.

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTER OF THE EVIDENCES.

PAGE

1. Spontaneous knowledge 207
2. Mathematical proofs 209
   Analytical and synthetical judgments . . 210
3. Empirical knowledge 212
4. *A priori* proofs 213
5. Kant's sense of *a priori* 214
6. Mathematical proof not the only ground of certainty 215
7. Limits of possible knowledge 218
8. Province of reason 220
9. Philosophy has given true results 223
10. Locke's argument for the Being of God . . 225
11. Berkeley's theism 226
12. Common judgment of Locke and Berkeley . . ib.

CHAPTER II.

ON SPACE AND TIME.

1. What is space? 231
2. The condition of phænomena 232
3. Not merely subjective 234
4. Whence its universality and necessity? . . 236
5. What is it in itself? 237

CHAPTER III.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL AND OF THE WORLD.

1. Fundamental principle 239

SECTION I.

PSYCHOLOGY: OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL.

PAGE

2. Foundation of this knowledge 240
3. Rational psychology 241
4. The soul as substance . . . . . ib.
5. As simple substance 243
6. As identical in different times . . . . ib.
7. Locke's account of personal identity . . . 244
8. Incorruptibility not deducible 245

SECTION II.

COSMOLOGY: OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATERIAL WORLD.

9. Properties of matter 247
Relations to space 248
Physical properties 249
10. Rational cosmology 250
11. Freewill and inertia 251

SECTION III.

OF THE MIND AS AN ORIGINAL POWER.

12. Fatalism favours atheism 253
13. Mind free from physical necessity . . . 255
14. The will determined by motives 257
15. Power of the reason 258
16. Question of originating power 260
17. Origin of motives 261
18. Fatalism an assumption 263
19. Freewill a practical truth 264
20. Conclusion 267

CHAPTER IV.

EVIDENCE OF AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE INFINITE BEING IN THE LIMITING CONDITIONS OF ALL KNOWLEDGE.

PAGE
1. Immensity of nature 269
2. Rational theology 272
3. Kant's antinomy 277
4. *Why now?* An objection to atheism . . . 279
5. The incomprehensible Being 281
6. Is One and Infinite 282

CHAPTER V.

A PRIORI PROOFS.

1. The ontological proof 285
2. The psychological proof 286
3. The cosmological proof . . . . . ib.
4. Critique of these proofs 287
5. Kant's theological ideal 289
6. Only one proof 292
7. Method of theism 294

CHAPTER VI.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

1. A Living Spirit 298

SECTION I.

THE DESIGN ARGUMENT.

2. Its province 301
3. Not an analogical argument 303
Instance of analogy 304

PAGE

4. Critique of the argument 306
5. Like effects have like causes 309
6. Extent of the inference 310
7. Hume's "unique" 312
8. Knowledge of human designers . . . . ib.
9. Supposed *reductio ad absurdum* 315
10. Answer. Deny the conclusion 317
11. Deny the premises 319
12. M. Comte's "Positive Philosophy" . . . 322

SECTION II.

THE DIVINE WILL.

13. The first Mover 330
14. Divine freedom and necessity 332
15. Divine motives unsearchable 333

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

1. Personality; how known 335
2. Charge of anthropomorphism 338
3. The word Person 340

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL.

1. Reason and feeling ultimately coincide . . . 343
2. Evidences in the feelings 346

SECTION I.

SENSE OF THE MARVELLOUS AND BEAUTIFUL.

PAGE

3. Sense of the marvellous 348
4. The marvellous in nature and in life . . . 350
5. The sense of the beautiful 352
6. Beauties of science 354
7. Not utilitarian 356

SECTION II.

THE BENEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.

8. Instincts and affections 358
9. Evidences of immortality 360
10. Marks of the Divine Character in nature . . 362

SECTION III.

THE SENSE OF DUTY.

11. An original faculty 364
12. It is universal 365
13. Pantheism in its relations to morality . . . 367
14. Atheism in its relations to morality . . . 369
15. The Epicurean system 370
16. The Stoical morality 371

SECTION IV.

THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL.

17. A purpose necessary 374
18. Misery of indolence 375
Conclusion 379

APPENDIX.

ON CAUSALITY.

PAGE
1. Conception of cause or power 391

SECTION I.

CAUSALITY A UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT.

2. Permanence of nature 393
A First Cause 395
4. Causality a principle of judgment . . . ib.
5. Universally received 396

SECTION II.

OBJECTIVE VALIDITY OF THE LAW OF CAUSALITY.

6. Known existence implies causation . . . 398
7. True in the world of experience 401
8. True beyond experience 402
9. Origin of the law 404

CHRISTIAN THEISM.

"THE EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS A BEING ALL POWERFUL, WISE, AND GOOD, BY WHOM EVERY THING EXISTS: AND PARTICULARLY TO OBVIATE DIFFICULTIES REGARDING THE WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF THE DEITY; AND THIS, IN THE FIRST PLACE, FROM CONSIDERATIONS INDEPENDENT OF WRITTEN REVELATION; AND, IN THE SECOND PLACE, FROM THE REVELATION OF THE LORD JESUS; AND, FROM THE WHOLE, TO POINT OUT THE INFERENCES MOST NECESSARY FOR, AND USEFUL TO MANKIND."

BOOK I.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE, AND THEIR MISAPPLICATION IN SYSTEMS OF ATHEISM AND PANTHEISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

The subject is suitable to the human mind.

THE subject of the present work is one, which, in some form or other, has excited the attention of every man who has entered into the possession of his birthright as an intelligent being. Few may have considered it deeply, none can have exhausted it; but the man has not lived, at least as man, to whom the question has never presented itself in some form,—"What am I, and what is this marvellous universe to which I belong?" If the inquiry be not pursued reflectively, yet in some feeling at least, however vague, it perpetually recurs,—"Whence am I; whither do I go; and what is the cause and the purpose of my existence here?"

These questions constitute the great problem of

human thought, till the timid inferences of reason are confirmed by the discoveries of revelation. Not but that both in man and nature the testimonies abound to the sublime truth,—THERE IS ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL; but they are perceived with difficulty and doubt, till human reasonings are confirmed by a Voice which we can know to be from God.

It is a truth which belongs to philosophy as well as to theology; to philosophy as an ultimate conclusion, to theology as a fundamental truth. Natural theology has its origin in the constitution of the mind, with its innate powers and tendencies. Even revelation must be void of meaning, unless with reference to an intelligent mind. For as colours are nothing, unless to a certain constitution of the eye and nerve through which they are perceived; as a moral law is nothing, without an inward moral sense to appreciate its distinctions and to be subject to its judgments; so revelation is unfounded and unmeaning, unless to a mind which can understand and estimate its evidences, and can form the conception of a Supreme Being.

Such a mind must possess faculties and capacities for general speculation and research: and of all the questions which can engage the thoughts, it is at once the most interesting and the most momentous,—whether That Great Being, whom we are accustomed to regard as the First Cause

and Abiding Principle of all things; the first anticipation of ignorance, the highest result of philosophy; the Beginning of existence, the End of thought; the Lord of creation, the Father of mankind; the Hope of the righteous, the Dread of the ungodly;—whether That Being do really exist, as it is unquestionable that these thoughts of Him are perpetually recurring to the mind.

Large extent of the subject.

2. It might seem, on a slight attention, that a question of so much interest and importance, one which has been discussed during so many ages, must before this have been probed to its centre, and examined in every form it can assume. But human thought is progressive. Ever unable of itself to comprehend the problems of existence, it can expect no more than through many devious wanderings, and the frequent recurrence of errors, to approximate continually to the truth. The being of God can never, like a geometrical proposition, be brought within the compass of our faculties. If we believe that He exists, we may anticipate that His nature must be unsearchable. We cannot know Him as He is: we must see Him in His works of power within us and without us. If we acknowledge Him to be the Creator of all, we may look for manifestations of His action throughout the whole creation. The self-existent Being must be the ground of all existence, and

even of the possibility of existence. He must be the Creator of matter in its most elementary form; the Disposer of its properties and powers; the Ordainer of its laws and adaptations; the Originator and Author, whether by transient or continued action, of all its revolutions and developments from the first act of creation, however simple, to the last result of existence, however complex. We may look then for indications of His action, and may perhaps find traces of His presence, not only in those designs and adaptations which secure the harmony and stability of the universe, but also in the properties of its most insignificant parts; not only in a vast and varied world, but in a stone one might kick in crossing a heath. The stone which Paley passes by, may tell a more wondrous story than the watch that he picks up. Its structure may contain the record of slow changes or sudden convulsions, which took place at some distant part of the earth, ages before the existence of our race. But the mind may go beyond its structure to its varied properties, chymical, mineralogical, and others, and from these to its bare existence as matter, and, unless content to rest in ignorance, can refer them to the agency of an unchanging and eternal God.

But the field of creation is widely extended, when we take account of its living and intelligent beings. The exhaustless wonders of organization,

the numberless adaptations which must concur for the preservation of a single living being, much more for that of many individuals and many kinds; above all, the nature of man as a being of thought and feeling; the original constitution of his mind; the laws of his existence, growth, and development; his powers, primary motives, and fundamental conceptions; his innate dispositions and unavoidable feelings and aspirations; the effects of his life in the world; the moral law in its origin, its action, and its meaning;—these subjects and others open out every one of them a new field, where we may look for the footsteps of the Creator. His work will certainly remain in all, His presence may be discoverable, and perhaps His action abiding. All must be searched to exhaust the field of natural theology. Some of them will engage our attention in this essay, not that we may construct new proofs of the being of God, but that we may examine the evidence which lies before us, and interpret His revelation of Himself.

Since then this evidence is to be sought in universal nature, and in the constitution of the mind; and since knowledge is continually increased, and the study of ourselves the most intricate and difficult in which we can engage; it follows that no human intellect or progress can ever exhaust the subject, or exhibit its evidences in their fulness.

3. The difficulty is much increased, when we take account of the disturbing causes of human judgment. The love of knowledge, and the fascination of systems, sometimes lead the inquirer to transgress the natural limits of his faculties, to build upon groundless assumptions, and to mistake partial views for the whole truth. Various theories of existence, each involving its peculiar speculations, and resulting in its peculiar form of unbelief, have been from time to time current in the world. Moral obliquities are a still more prevalent source of error. It is the interest of the wicked man—at least he is apt to think so—that there shall be no God: and men easily believe what they wish to be true. On the other hand, it is not without example that the false show of religion in nominal Christians who are practical atheists, may lead more honest, though perhaps sensitive and hasty minds, to treat as a delusion a belief which is manifestly insincere.

Such considerations of the ignorance and imperfection of human nature, may account for the various and inconsistent theories of atheism which have deceived or amused the world. Every imaginable system would seem to have had its advocates. It has been attempted by theories of dead matter, and of living matter, and of a senseless, inanimate God, to supersede the doctrine of the living God. Positive atheism has often tried its

atomic and its hylozoic theories, with chance or necessity for its deity. It has deified the universe, and assumed the more imposing name of pantheism. Negative atheism professes to acquiesce in unavoidable scepticism respecting the causes and the purpose of existence, denying all knowledge of the First Cause, and affirming it to be impossible.

Unsatisfactory proofs of natural religion.

4. Theists also are ill agreed upon their proofs and evidences, and even upon the principles by which they are to be ascertained. Unbelief is organized and active: new objections are raised, and old objections furbished; novel systems are set up, or theories long since confuted are revived; infidel publications are circulated, some of them acute and eloquent, and, however erroneous in speculation, yet, in some respects, not untruthful to human nature; while there is no more concurrence among Christians respecting the foundations of natural religion, than among the various systems of unbelief.

Nothing is more certain to retard the progress of truth, than to recommend it by doubtful evidences, and inconsequent proofs. This remark applies to the celebrated *à priori* proof, as it is called, of Dr. Samuel Clarke, or at least that part of it which rests on the "ideas of infinity and eternity." The whole "demonstration" has had a

traditionary fame far beyond its merits, and this portion of the argument has received the pleasant animadversion of Dr. Reid;—"Space and time, he thought, are only abstract or partial conceptions of an immensity and eternity which forces itself upon our belief. And as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a Being who is necessarily immense and eternal. These," says Dr. Reid, "are the speculations of men of superior genius, but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine [1]."

Mr. Stewart has an observation on this proof to the same effect, and Lord Brougham believes that hardly any person has ever been at all satisfied with it. Their remarks are turned to account by an atheistic writer [2] of the day, who considers the fate of Dr. Clarke's and all *à priori* labours to be sealed, and hastily concludes that the argument from design is all that is left to natural theology.

All the arguments of Dr. Clarke lose the force which may belong to them intrinsically, in consequence of the uncertainty of his *method*. It is impossible to establish the great truth of the Being of God on a firm basis, without investigating the

[1] Sir W. Hamilton's Reid, p. 343.

[2] Mr. Holyoake.

principles of reason and the limits of knowledge, and examining the procedure of the mind in its acquirement of truth. So far was Clarke from such an undertaking, that they who have examined his writings, can hardly doubt that he was indebted to Spinoza for the best parts of his work. Had he enunciated the Cartesian principle, which was assumed by Spinoza, that all clear and distinct ideas are representative of truth [3], he might have avoided the common pitfall of philosophers in the confusion between the notions of the mind and the realities external to it. As it is, his famed "demonstration" is more ostentatious than conclusive, and his confutation of Spinoza only to be appreciated by those who have read it immediately after the ethics of that celebrated pantheist.

Similar observations apply to other proofs which are sometimes alleged, such as those which appeal to our innate faculties, or to a distinct religious faculty or intuition, without due examination of the mental constitution. It must be possible to estimate the weight of arguments, and the validity of conceptions, and to ascertain, on the question before us, how far, and on what conditions, we may look for the exactness of demonstration. If strict proof be impossible, we may expect that it can be shown to be impossible, and may see good reason

[3] This principle is commonly called Des Cartes', but was "nothing new" in him.—Sir W. Hamilton on Reid, p. 376.

to be satisfied without it. If we have moral reasons and practical proofs, we may perhaps know them to be such as the case admits of, and may find them to be as convincing on this subject as exact demonstration in geometry. If the atheist demand a proof which will silence and defy objection, he cannot be answered without the previous question,—'What proof is possible? what demonstration will be a defiance?'

Argument from final causes.

5. The celebrated and popular argument from final causes has not, in this country at least, received that examination of its principles which its importance demands. Volumes have been devoted to its illustration; paragraphs have sufficed for the survey of its philosophical foundations, and the settling of its legitimate extent in the domain of knowledge. This work however, though dry and uninteresting to many readers, is no less necessary than the former. Without it reason may be amused, but is not enriched; precisely as a man may be interested by adding field to field, and estate to estate, in a paper plan, or by beautiful views and pleasant walks over the cultivated country, but is none the richer, till the surface has been surveyed, and the boundary marked out, and the dry and technical language of title-deeds has settled it to be his own. Even theists are but little agreed upon the argument from final causes. Some

regard it as strictly demonstrative of all that reason can discover of a Creator. Others receive it with hesitation, as the best proof which is to be had; uncertain why it is the best, and regretting the absence of a better. Others have heard that "it begs the very question which sceptics dispute," and are almost ready to resign it. The atheist seizes the occasion to make it the butt of his sarcasm, and to represent it as the resource of dulness and ignorance.

Another instance of this uncertainty occurs in the question of the relations of natural theology to revelation. Some writers are of opinion that natural theology can never of itself demonstrate the existence of God; others are no less confident, that even revelation must be without ground or meaning, till this preliminary truth has been established.

Progress of natural theology.

6. On these and similar fundamental questions, it is not too much to expect that the united efforts of Christian writers will at length establish principles, which will command general assent, if not with others, at least among themselves. To attempt the investigation of such principles, is to enter upon a very difficult field of labour,—that of the limits of reason. For most of the difficulties which have been indicated depend upon the limits of the faculties, and are to be set at rest, not so

much by investigating *what we may know*, as by inquiring *why we may know no more.*

To attempt the determination of these limits,—to seek to ascertain the extent of knowledge and the validity of the mind's inferences and inductions, is an arduous undertaking,—one which must expose us to the charge of presumption; especially where it shall be found, that, after professing to expose the errors, and repudiate the systems of others, we have fallen into similar mistakes.

But the fear of failure ought not to repress endeavour; nor can it be a just reproach to have confidence in the progress of knowledge. The allegation of scepticism that philosophy has been fruitless, is much overstated, and profound thinkers have expressed the belief, that careful thought will lead at length to results of universal authority and reception. This must be the work of many, and the result of time. It will repay all labour, and deserves the ambition of a life, to make some progress in this direction. It is due to the expectations of that good man, no less wise than munificent, who looked onward to future ages, and, solicitous for the permanence of truth, provided by his will that false theories, which are constantly springing up, should be met, every forty years, by new efforts in its defence; it is due to him, that the candidate for his honours shall aim to meet

the exigencies of the times, if not to advance the course of inquiry towards the final suppression of error, and the universal prevalence of truth and goodness.

Foundations of natural theology.

7. A double purpose is proposed by the present essay. The first, to answer the objections of atheists and deists, and to examine the foundations of the true doctrine of the Supreme Being; the second, to awaken a deeper and more abiding sense of His being and presence. We have to show that it is no delusion, but a reasonable faith, to think Him ever near us, though unseen; to see Him by His agency in all things; to believe that all things are full of God. Every perception, and thought, and feeling; every object of the visible universe; the face of nature in the harmonious order of its unchanging laws, as well as in its apparent perturbations and convulsions; the fleeting clouds, the fitful volcano, "the everlasting hills," the infinitesimal uniformity of the daily period; the bursting storm, the swift meteor of a moment, and the planetary inequalities of a myriad years; the pictured landscape, the waste howling wilderness, the sandy desert; the infinite ocean, in the appalling fury of its tempest, and in the majestic dignity of its calm; all nature, in its minuteness and in its vastness; the millions of living things in air, earth, and water, and "the

majestical roof fretted with golden fire;" the living dust of the earth, and the starry dust of the skies, whose minutest grains are systems of worlds; the boulder of the road-side, the huge volcanic moon, and this varied globe of the world, records, all of them, of the physical agencies of countless ages; and yet more than all, man in his frame, his powers, his feelings,—"man, noble in reason, infinite in faculties, in form and moving so express and admirable;" the unnumbered fitnesses of his material dwelling, so "fearfully and wonderfully made;" the affections and aspirations of the soul; the spirit that, spurning at meanness, and never stooping to low selfishness and cunning, directs to the INFINITE AND ETERNAL ONE its desire of perfection, its hope of immortality, and sees, and loves, and adores in God, the ever-flowing fountain of goodness and holiness; man, individually and in society; every circumstance of life, every event of history; the decay or the development, the fears or the hopes of the individual and of the race;—all things discover the presence or the work of God; all, except the blight of evil, and even this in its history and results;—all things are full of God, all reveal the present God.

We are to investigate the reasons of this belief, —reasons which, before examination, have their influence on the mind. The still, small voice of

the Creator may be heard within the soul, though formal proofs may be unknown. Deeper than logic, and prior to it, is the truth that God exists,—the assurance that the Lord of creation is the universal Parent of mankind; that to the devout and guileless soul He is the Friend in life, the Protector in death, the Hope and Happiness of the long, long future.

CHAPTER II.

OF TERMS AND METHOD. MODERN SYSTEMS.

The sacred name.

1. It may be anticipated that the mind is incapable of forming any adequate notion of that great Being whom it designates by the sacred name. But it may attach to the name certain definite though inadequate conceptions. The name of a man will recal him to remembrance in certain characteristics by which he is known, whether of appearance, or manner, or perhaps of some work or action, if we have never seen him; although these can furnish a very partial description of his nature or character. We may thus think of the Supreme Being as one all-powerful, wise, and good, by whom every thing exists. Whatever mysteries may lie hid in the depths of that eternal nature, these words as easily convey to the mind the notion of a real Being, as any other partial and imperfect conceptions can convey that of a living man. It is to be shown that this inward concep-

tion of the mind is an expression of outward truth, —that such a Being really exists.

The word *is*, or *exists*, may be used in very different senses. Its ambiguity was the source of the early controversy on Berkeley's theory of matter. It was used in one sense by himself, in another by the critics who desired him to test his theory by throwing himself down a precipice. In questions of philosophy serious errors may arise from the ambiguity of common words.

The word "exist."

We shall therefore take the word *exist*, in its most extended signification, to express all being, real or apparent, without regard to the source or manner of existence. According to Berkeley, the existence of matter is nothing real in itself, but depends upon the continued existence and agency of mind. It exists as the agency of the Supreme Being, and as apparent to the minds of men. This, then, may be called *dependent existence;* and it may be defined generally, that the existence of A is dependent on that of B, when it is such that it would necessarily cease with that of B.

Dependent existence.

In this sense of the word it may be said that the figures of a dream exist. In whatever manner they arise, they exist as affections of the sleeper's mind; they have an existence dependent on his own. Such, according to Kant, is the only existence which the pure reason, independently of the practical reason or moral nature of man, can attri-

bute to the Supreme Being. Mere reason, he maintains, cannot possibly ascertain the real objective existence of the Supreme Being. Its God is only an ideal of its own.

Independent existence.

The existence of A may be said to be *independent*, when it has no present dependence on any other being. This may also be called absolute existence. We may imagine an eternal succession of finite beings, of which each individual is derived from a preceding one, but is independent during its continuance, and vanishes in virtue of laws which have been derived along with its existence, but afterwards act within itself. This is a conceivable atheistic system, and has had its advocates. Or the theist may hold the independent existence of created beings. It is *conceivable* that their existence may have been communicated by a single creative act, and may continue through the efficiency of that past act, and in the energy of life imparted once for all. This like every other theory has found supporters.

Underived being.

These, it is evident, are distinctions of the internal notions of the mind, and must not be assumed to correspond to things without. A third conception remains, that of a Being who is not only independent but *underived*[1]. This is

[1] I had employed the word *absolute* in this sense, and have transferred it, to be in conformity with the usage of Sir W. Hamilton, Discussions, p. 13. Dependent Being is sometimes called Conditioned;

infinite being. It is that existence of which the sole cause and reality rest in the Being Himself, independent of any previous or superior being. Such, without question, is the existence, which our thesis attributes to the Creator. The sacred name designates a Being by whom all things exist, —not only all things which now are, but whatever have been, are, or shall be. We are to understand Him to be one, whose being is neither the sum of the existences of finite beings, nor any development nor relation of the things which compose the visible universe, but is independent of finite things, and superior to them, and the Cause of them. He is such that finite created beings like men are no parts of His nature, and in no way essential to Him. Whatever may be hid in the depths of His eternal nature, whatever may be the power of creation, whatever the dependence of the world upon Him, He is in no way dependent upon it, but the Creator and supreme Lord of the universe.

Question of method.

2. In inquiries respecting existence, the first important question which presents itself is that of METHOD. This question relates to the fundamental principles to be assumed, and the plan to be followed in building upon them. Some first principles must be assumed. Every physical

Independent or Absolute, and Underived or Infinite Being, are both Unconditioned.

movement must be referred to something fixed; every mover must have a standpoint. The movements of mind are subject to the same necessity. The want of a standing-place is the difficulty of Des Cartes [2], as well as of Archimedes. Whatever be the direction of thought, whether it deduce the logical consequences of given premises, or investigate the reality of things, it must always advance from the known to the unknown. The mathematician starts from his self-evident axioms and definitions; the logician, from his premises; the natural philosopher, from the observed phenomena of nature, and the common notions of *law* and *cause;* and the validity of their conclusions depends upon that of their assumptions. Every inquiry into existence, whether of the world, the soul, or God, must proceed, in like manner, from the known to the unknown.

Cartesian principle.

3. What then can we assume as known in the present inquiry? Shall we assume with Des Cartes, that every clear and distinct conception is objectively true [3], and that the idea of God is of this kind? Then our work is short and our inference rapid. But we are open to the question,—What warrant have you for assuming that your inward conceptions correspond to outward reali-

[2] Med. ii.

[3] Discours de la Méthode iv. Med. iii.

ties? Suppose it granted that the mind of man forms a clear and distinct conception of a Supreme Being; suppose, what can scarcely be questioned, that the laws of the mind naturally evolve the conception of the Infinite; yet what answer shall we make to Kant, the most profound of inquirers, when he tells us that this ideal is but a regulative principle of the understanding, and is objectively void?

Conceptions of space and time.

4. Or shall we take our stand, with Clarke, on the infinite conceptions of space and time, and infer from these the existence of an infinite Being, of whose nature they are determinations or attributes? Here again the same great critic would meet us with his demand,—What are space and time, but pure forms of the intuition, that is "the subjective condition of sensibility under which alone external intuition is possible to us?" By demanding what we can know of them as objective, he sends us back to the examination of our powers and processes of thought.

Ontology rests on psychology.

5. Thus we are not permitted to take the short method of resting our knowledge of God, without inquiry, on some original faculty of the mind, whether faith, or feeling, or intuition, or inspira-

[4] Kant's Kritik der Rein. Vern. Rosenkranz' Ed. 1838, p. 37. Heywood's Transl. p. 27.

tion, or by whatever name it may be called. It is possible that the judge to whom we thus appeal may be fully authorized and competent; it is probable that the universal religious feeling of mankind has its seat in an original intuition of the soul. But the atheist calls it a delusion, or a sense which sees things that do not exist. Such is his answer to a claim of intellectual discernment, which involves the charge of intellectual blindness against himself. The claim will be demanded its credentials, and must be ready to give proof of its pretensions.

It seems then that we may be led into abstruse investigations, which many may not have the patience to pursue. But there is no alternative. The least thought may show, that we are very little beside the vastness of nature, and can ever see but a little way. We cannot expect the glance of intuition to pierce the mysteries of being to the First Cause and principle of all things. If our minds could embrace the universe, and there were no height nor depth beyond our reach, one proof might be enough; one look might penetrate to the source of life, and so unveil to us the First Cause, or principle, or the totality of all things, that we should be able to make the beginning of being the beginning also of thought, and the order of nature the order also of the mental procedure. We need not then go back from consequences to causes, nor

seek for agencies in their effects; we should need no *induction*, but should *deduce*, in its natural order, the knowledge of whatever is, and should supersede the laborious work of collecting facts and observing things as they are, by the easier intuition of what they must be.

But this is not the method of human knowledge. No such royal road has been found. "Nothing without labour" is still the universal law; it grasps every pursuit, not less the intellectual than the material, the moral, or the religious; and the undertaking which claims to be exempt gives beforehand the certain omen of its failure.

Locke has some fine observations, in the introductory chapter of his Essay, on the importance of ascertaining the powers of the mind. "It is of great use to the sailor," he says, "to know the length of his line." Without question all knowledge of being must rest on knowledge of the mind—all ontology on psychology. Every inquirer must begin by measuring the length of his line; at least as soon as he shall have assured himself that he has a firm standpoint at the surface and a line to throw.

Existence of oneself and of the world.

6. In examining the nature of the mind, and its procedure in the discovery of the Supreme Mind, we must consider our knowledge of the *self* or *soul*,

and of the *external world*, before we can examine our higher knowledge of the Deity. To begin with the doubt of Des Cartes and his famous "*Cogito ergo sum*[5]," "*My thoughts manifest my existence*," would be to incur with him the implacable ridicule of superficialness. And, as Hume observed, it would be vain and frivolous to discuss, as if it could be thought doubtful, the existence of the outward world. But it is a very important question, how we know it to exist, and how we come to distinguish the mind from the world, the self from the not-self, the *ego* from the *non ego*. Some of the most imposing systems of unbelief adopt the notion of a deity inseparable from the world. Others confuse the notions of the soul and God, or both these notions with that of matter. Christian theism maintains that God is distinct from the universe and from man, though not apart from them, superior to them in nature and essence, though omnipresent. It may turn out that our knowledge of a personal God rests on the same principles, or is necessarily implied in that of an outward world. This prior question then must have an important bearing on our subject.

Suppose the inquirer to commence with the affirmation of his own existence, whether it be

[5] Discours iv. And Augustine de Civ. Dei xi. 26. "Certum est esse me, si fallor . . . ."

assumed, or inferred from the undeniable facts of present consciousness, in which it is implied; still the question arises, What is the meaning of this *sum, I am, I exist?* Does it mean, I exist of myself, or in another being? independent or dependent? Am I such in my existence, that, if I could now follow up any perception to its ultimate conditions, or trace back any act of my will to its inchoation, or direct my attention along the stream of life to its source,—is my existence such, that that act of perception, or will, or that stream of life, would be found to have its termination in myself, without connexion or dependence upon any other being? May I assume, in short, the distinct personal existence of the soul with a will originating in itself? If so his work will be simplified; he will have gained a firm standing-place for the commencement of his inquiries. From the manifest power of the assumed will to originate change or motion, he will be led to ascribe those stupendous changes and motions of nature, which so far exceed the powers of man, to a will immensely superior to his own, and this will to an Infinite Mind.

But his philosophy will be open to question from many quarters, and an active teacher of atheism brings the objection to bear upon his theology:—"If a man discern within himself no first principle of movement, he of course needs

none out of himself. If in his own actions he sees no marks of (what others call) will, why should he see them in nature? This is precisely the case with the atheist [6]."

Supposed dangers of speculation.

7. The theist is thus challenged to examine the grounds of his doctrine. It is one which no inquiry can unsettle, no scrutiny can invalidate. Speculative researches, like all other pursuits, have their dangers; but it is impossible without them to know what is within or without the province of reason, or to meet the exigencies of thought on the great truth of theology. The limits of knowledge, it has been truly said, are likely to lie where we grow weary of thinking farther. If, as some affirm, our natural faculties are fitted for no knowledge but of phænomena; if the senses be our first and only guides, and we must rest satisfied with the information they afford us; still some inquiry is necessary to convince us of our hopeless ignorance, and that we may cease the vain attempt to transgress the narrow limits of man's domain. This conclusion, we need scarcely say, would deny to unaided reason all knowledge of a Supreme Being, and would go far, if pressed to the extreme, to take away all meaning from revelation. It would leave us in desolate

[6] Mr. Holyoake.

scepticism, without God, without purpose in life. Such is the design of the atheist when he interdicts the highest application of the faculties, and would confine us to the knowledge of the senses.

Natural theology rests on principles, which are equally competent to establish its truth, and to expose the sophisms of unbelief. The depths of speculation cannot be more dangerous to the theist than to the atheist. They may seem for a time to throw up noxious vapours, which obscure the atmosphere of truth: but the vapours will pass away, and the foundations will have been deeper laid. To have confidence in God, is to believe that no region to which thought may penetrate can be dangerous by the Divine appointment. Man's successes are by many failures. He is very liable to err, and may be bewildered by unseen influences, whether he walk the surface, or descend to the caverns of the earth: but God does not deal so hardly with him, his condition is not so pitiable, as that to think much must involve him in error and uncertainty. He may think and err, but he must think again. It is not credible that "the field of religious ideas, when it is trodden by the foot of natural reason, is only a field of problems and contradictions." Granted that philosophical investigations, "when eagerly and incautiously pursued, lead to the most terrible doubts," yet the danger is much exaggerated, when we are told

that "this is the experience of all the systems of all the schools in every age of the world[7];" and if it were so, yet the stagnant marsh of ignorance is more pernicious than the clash of conflicting theories. Reason may mislead; and what may not? But till we see men pluck out the eye of sense because it offends, we may doubt whether it be the fear of error that leads them to pluck out the eye of the soul. If God be the Creator of man, and reason the faculty which distinguishes man from the brutes, then reason has its appointed work, in the individual, and in the race. Even its errors have evolved truth, and its strangest vagaries will end in establishing it the more firmly. Is it not a plain dictate of natural religion, one to be more widely recognized, that to develope the powers of the soul, and give them their proper application, is a first duty to the Creator; and that there can be no worse imputation upon His wisdom than to mistrust His best gifts, and wrap them away unemployed in a napkin? Next to His Divine Presence,—essential even with this,—reason is the highest talent which God has committed to His children. It is not to be admitted that He has bestowed a good gift, yet made it impossible to employ it safely; or communicated faculties and powers, which cannot be used without plunging us in error and uncertainty.

[7] Vinet's Vital Christianity, chap. I.

8. The history of philosophy, to the most recent times, is often represented as an arena of debates and failures. Speculative inquiries are not to be evaded, by assuming the results of any system as received. Yet need we not, on this account, either despair of philosophy, or regard the great truth of theology as hanging in uncertainty, till philosophers have agreed upon their principles. It is but recently, in its lifetime of six thousand years, that the world has discovered the true theory of the mechanical laws of dead matter. A longer period may well be requisite, for tracing the more intricate movements of living mind. But the material motions of the universe were performed with the nicest exactness, though unobserved: and the mind too has its laws, not so simple perhaps and comprehensive as those of matter, but no less stable and binding; and the souls of men have been attracted, when they least observed it, by an influence from the Source of Life. In discovering to man the existence of the soul, the world, and the Creator, nature has taught him better than he can teach himself. The knowledge of a Supreme Being may be as universal and as valid, though equally difficult to follow by reflection to its first principles, as that of the more immediate objects of apprehension. Man may know by the teaching of nature: he cannot know that he knows without reflection. He needs philosophy to esti-

mate the value of his cognitions, and to give them currency.

Locke's system.

The theory which has been most generally prevalent in Britain, is that which finds the origin of all knowledge in sensation. It may be summed up in the old dogma,—"*Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu.*" There is nothing in the understanding but what has come through sensation. Locke is generally regarded as the founder of this school, but cannot be held responsible for all its extravagancies. He assumes the existence of the mind as distinct from the world, and possessed of a capacity for receiving ideas or impressions, which represent the truth of things without. These ideas are considered to be *representations*, or images of objects perceived, and are derived from them in the act of perception. Experience is assumed as an ultimate fact. Investigation is made indeed of the various *occasions* on which the different ideas arise in experience, but no inquiry is instituted into its nature, and no account is given of its process. The mind possesses nothing innate but the ability to learn. It is likened to a sheet of white paper on which various characters may be written, but which has no disposition to receive one impression rather than another. It has, no doubt, an inward experience, but this is only the perception of its own operations, which, on the pure theory of sensation, can inform it of

nothing beyond itself[8]. It is open to whatever instruction it may receive. For the reception of knowledge, and even for the formation of the faculties, every thing depends upon observation and education. It does not even possess fixed moral principles, but may be led with like facility towards good or evil, towards virtue or towards vice.

The results of this representation philosophy are well known. Since the mind is cognizant only of its own ideas, it possesses no voucher for their objective meaning. Knowledge is defined to consist in a conformity between the ideas and the reality of things; but, while nothing can be known of the reality except through the idea, there can be no comparison of the one with the other, nor any means of ascertaining that there is any conceivable resemblance between them. It would have been impossible therefore to be assured that any object exists out of the mind itself, had not Locke diverged

[8] At this point the system of Locke is unsettled. If the knowledge attained be, in part, dependent for its character on the "faculties fit to attain it;" if "the operations of the mind" contribute to its formation in a fixed and certain way, the system is no longer one of pure sensation. Such is the purport of many passages of Locke, and would, no doubt, have been his opinion at the present day. But the general tendency of the essay appears to be in the opposite direction, till he is obliged, on different principles, to establish his knowledge of the world and of the Supreme Being. All that can be said in defence of Locke will be found in Mr. Rogers' Article, Ed. Rev. April, 1854. Essays, vol. iii.

at this point from the general direction of his system.

Berkeley's idealism.

9. The idealism of Berkeley (and Collier) was an easy deduction from the doctrine of representation. This system denied the existence of the material world, except as a Divine representation to the human mind. All we see in the world, the appearances and properties, the laws and relations of things, which we combine under the word *matter*, are only certain effects produced on the mind according to certain laws and by the immediate action of the Deity[9], and have no existence in themselves independently of mind. This is a consistent and intelligible theory, and can in no way affect the ordinary relations of life in the world. It may perhaps be shown to be improbable, or inconsistent with the necessary principles of knowledge, and therefore unphilosophical. But no reasoning can confute it, nor prove it to be impossible in the nature of things. It is quite conceivable that our life in the world may be not a reality, but a dream, of which the figures and

[9] Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge:—§ iii. "The absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*." § xxix. "There is some other will or spirit that produces them," for "they have no dependence on my will." § xxxiii. "They are imprinted on the senses by the Author of Nature." § xxx. "The set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense, are called the laws of nature."

visions are represented, according to certain rules and unchanging laws, by the agency of a Superior Being. The truthfulness of that Being assures us that these laws will be in that constant relation to the actions of man's will, which is essential to the purposes, especially the moral purposes, of life. But no appeal to the truth of God or the common sense[1] of mankind can wholly set aside the pretensions of the idealist; much less can he be answered, as has been soberly imagined, by kicking a stone, or desiring him to throw himself down a precipice—practical arguments, which are decisive enough of a certain relation between the human body and a hard stone, but discover nothing of the essential nature of either of them.

Hume's scepticism.

10. But idealism is generally believed to have found a more dangerous antagonist in its own legitimate offspring. It is often represented to have found its *reductio ad absurdum* in the scepticism of David Hume. This celebrated man has been the author, indirectly, of all modern philosophy; for Kant in Germany, and Reid at home, both acknowledged that he had awakened them to their speculations; and in these two all later systems have had their origin. Hume is commonly said

[1] The term *common sense* is here used in its vulgar acceptation of an unreflective judgment. It receives a philosophical meaning in Sir W. Hamilton, and sometimes in Reid.

to have advanced the one fatal step beyond Berkeley, and to have had the satisfaction of throwing down a precipice all who held the doctrine of representative ideas. The yawning gulf of total scepticism became the grave of idealism. Material substance in Locke is nothing but an unknown support of qualities. Berkeley could find no reason why that which is unknown should be considered to exist, and allowed no existence except that of God and created spirits, but neither of them thought of questioning the existence of the soul. Berkeley denied the existence of matter, but, "as became his order," says Reid, "was unwilling to give up the world of spirits. Mr. Hume shows no such partiality for spirits[2]." It was his honour, if such it be deemed, to question the being of both soul and world, and to leave us nothing but a world of ideas and impressions.

Such is the common account of the progress of philosophy, or rather its fruitless efforts, previously to the time of Reid and Kant. Locke and Berkeley were the giants of an old world which perished in Hume's deluge[3]. The new world has ever since been labouring to reconstruct itself from the ruins, and to find some safer foundation for its speculative edifices.

[2] Works, p. 293.

[3] "The Treatise of Human Nature drowned all in one universal deluge." Reid, p. 103. This coincidence is accidental.

We shall have occasion to show that this account is substantially neither true nor fair, and that Hume's scepticism was not a legitimate deduction from Locke and Berkeley. These philosophers possessed, in fact, and distinctly enunciated the only possible principle of all philosophy or common sense,—a principle which by Hume was unceremoniously disowned and set aside, and which is not more clearly vindicated in Reid, far less so in Kant, than in those who preceded Hume.

Scottish school.

11. The Scottish recoil from the scepticism of Hume will be found to have brought back principles of the greatest value in natural theology. But they are no where formally applied by Reid or his successors, nor carried out to their most important results. This school, it has been said, has given us rather a preparation for philosophy than a philosophy itself.

Kant.

12. The celebrated system of the great German philosopher will demand a somewhat longer notice; for it was extended to the criticism of all knowledge, whether of the soul, the world, or God; and has given rise indirectly to many theories both religious and philosophical.

Kant's philosophy was the other recoil from the extreme scepticism of Hume. To construct a barrier against its sweeping conclusions, he re-exa-

mines the first principles of cognition, and reverts to that which derives all knowledge from the senses. This assumption needs qualification. Undoubtedly all knowledge begins with experience, but it does not on this account all arise out of experience. It may be a compound of that which is derived from sensation, with another element from the mind itself, and this is not empirical but innate.

It is a fact that we do possess cognitions which cannot have come from experience. Experience can never furnish us with judgments which are *necessarily* and *universally* valid; such, for instance, as the axioms of mathematics, and the principle, *all change must have a cause.* It is therefore assumed that these judgments must have their origin in the mind itself, and the Critique of Pure Reason contains a profound investigation of the innate, original principles[4] of the mind. There is nothing in the results of his investigation but what might have been anticipated from his original principle, that that part of all knowledge which has not come through the senses has been contributed by the mind from itself[5]. It is evi-

[4] *Pure,* or *à priori conceptions* or *categories,* as they are called. The whole work, but especially this part of it, may probably be thought by most readers far more obscure than it need have been.

[5] According to the principle of Leibnitz (founded on that of former philosophers), "Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi ipse intellectus." Leib. Op. Phil. Erdman's Ed. 1840, pp. 180. 223.

dent that, although we may find in the understanding a ground for the pure knowledge of the subjective self, that is of the mind, as it is manifested to itself in the facts of consciousness, yet we cannot by this means gain any knowledge of things really existing external to the mind. We gain a *subjective*, not an *objective* knowledge. For this we are still as much dependent upon experience as before. Science is confined to the subjective field by the very principles of the system.

After applying his principles to our conceptions of the soul and of the world, and having shown that inquiries respecting their nature had been pressed beyond the limits of possible knowledge,—that, by an unavoidable illusion, the mind mistakes appearances for things, he goes on to examine the proofs then current of the existence of the Supreme Being. "The theological idea" shares the fate of the others. It is found to be nothing more than an inevitable product of the mind, useful and necessary as a regulative principle of thought, but a mere empty conception, without objective signification, because experience cannot furnish it with matter from without. Reason gains the ideal from itself, but "in vain expands its wings to rise above the sensible world by the mere force of speculation."

Scientific knowledge then became impossible; but it was the result of the critique, that every

system of dogmatic unbelief perished along with it. Such subjects admit of no strict proof on either side. Kant would have us satisfied to know that beyond ourselves we can know nothing. "He made himself," says Madame de Staël, "so deeply learned in the science of being, only to demonstrate its own insufficiency: like a new Curtius, he threw himself into the gulf of abstraction, in order to fill it up[6]." He professed, by destroying science to make room for belief[7]. We must be satisfied with something short of demonstration, and it remains to inquire, whether we may not still have ground for practical faith. These investigations do not bear on this part of our subject: suffice it to say, that Kant is a philosophical, not a theological sceptic; and finds in the moral nature of man the evidences of God, of freedom, and of immortality.

It was the aim of his "pure reason," to check the inroads of scepticism; but it is now admitted that he opened the way to a more formidable system than that of Hume. In searching for the subjective elements of knowledge, and endeavouring to establish them on a secure basis, he enlarged the circle of the mind, till nothing was left which could be said to belong to the outward world. He thus sowed the seeds of an idealism more intense

[6] Germany.

[7] Pure Reason. Preface to 2nd edition.

than Berkeley's, and of a more decided scepticism than Hume's.

Later German systems.

13. It is not a little remarkable that the philosophy of Reid also, the other recoil from Hume, while it aims at subverting the system of Berkeley, leaves the door open, and points out the way, to the egoistical system of Fichte[8]. The chief difference between this system and Berkeley's is a very notable one. Berkeley denied the self-reality of the visible world, but affirmed decidedly the real existence of the Infinite Being. In fact what is taken from the world is assigned to Divine agency. According to Fichte, the world exists only in appearance, which is not however a representation of any Divine or external agency, but the mind's perception of its own spontaneous action. The mind is thus the creator of its own world, if not also of its Supreme Being. But we need not examine the refined doctrine of the author upon this important subject[9].

His system had the merit of being a veritable novelty, a peculiar merit, at least, if not a high one. He advanced it, at first, with unusual confidence, but afterwards admitted it to be equivalent

[8] This observation is Sir W. Hamilton's. Reid, p. 128.

[9] On the metaphysical romances of Fichte and his successors, the reader will find probably quite as much information as he will desire in Morell's History of Modern Philosophy, vol. ii.

to nihilism. This was to confess, that, notwithstanding its subtilty, its chief merit was its absurdity. Fichte realized the story of Frankenstein; he fled from the monster of his own creation, and endeavoured to find a new basis and safer principles of knowledge.

But the nihilism which was so alarming to Fichte, is fearlessly maintained and taught by Hegel and his various followers. This school bears much the same relation to Fichte as Hume to Berkeley. Fichte's peculiar system affirms the being of mind, and of matter as a modification of mind. Hegel "has no such partiality" for mind. He sees no reason why that which perceives should exist any more than that which is perceived. We are to believe in neither rather than in both. The only thing which can be affirmed to exist is the *relation* between them!

Thus the most obvious result of the intellectual excitement of Germany since the life of Kant, is to have eliminated both mind and matter from existence, and to have left us a universe of relations. Hume had eliminated mind and matter, and left us impressions and ideas. What may be the exact difference, in point of fact, between a universe of impressions and a universe of relations, may be left to those curious in such researches. Common observers will be apt to think, that the chief effect of the German recoil

from the nihilism of Hume is to have substituted a dogmatic and positive, for a modest and negative scepticism. The good sense of the avowed sceptic stands in contrast to the extravagance of the idealist. Hume enunciated his doctrine as the result of speculation on received principles; but so far from pretending to press it on the world, he admitted it to be irreconcileable with its necessary beliefs, and opposed to its unavoidable convictions. Hegel has no such modesty; the more preposterous his dogmas, the more necesary to be believed: their inconsistency with the beliefs and convictions of men is no disparagement of their truth, but rather a testimony in their favour.

The history of German metaphysics, since the time of Hume, may be summed up, it seems, in a few words. Kant was satisfied that the field of external objective knowledge was no longer defensible. He therefore sought refuge from practical and religious scepticism in the citadel of the subjective self. He saw that the ideas and impressions of Hume had a real existence, though subjective. He saw that all which concerns man in duty or in destiny must be presented to his mental apperception before it can be his. Right and wrong, pleasure and pain, are real to man in the internal conscience and feeling. But something is wanted beyond conscience and feeling, to give the assurance that the moral law is eternal, and that

its awards of happiness or misery are not the fleeting feelings of a moment. He saw the citadel to which he fled to be strong and impregnable in itself, but he forgot the danger of blockade. No defence could have been more gallant. The strength of self is always great in men who have renounced the world. Never were words more sublime, nor deeds more heroic than those of the practical philosophy [1]. But when the field without had been abandoned, all approaches blocked up, and supplies cut off, the garrison was soon starved out, and found that prolonged defence must end in annihilation.

The history is not without instruction. It has given the world a lesson, which one may think might have been anticipated, that nihilism,—no world, no self, no God,—nihilism is the only possible philosophy,—that "world and thought, observation and observer, man and God, are swallowed up and lost in the boundless immensity of a horrible chaos [2]"—unless a safe and sure passage be found from thought to being, from subjective to objective, from phænomena to reality, from the internal mind to the external world.

[1] See, for example, the Life of Fichte.

[2] Vinet's Vital Christianity. Transl. p. 36.

CHAPTER III.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE.

SECTION I.

FACULTIES OF THE MIND, AND OBVIOUS FACTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The question stated.

1. The nature of our inquiry does not lead us to speak of the Existence of the Supreme Being as a truth which can reasonably be called in question. It is a truth as natural to the mind as the existence of itself or of an outward world, and cannot be represented as doubtful, but by the same audacity of scepticism. We are to inquire, then, *How do we come by the knowledge of Him*, which we believe ourselves to have, and how can we be reflectively assured of its validity?

The answer is to be sought in the general principles of all knowledge, and we shall begin from the last and obvious facts of perception and action, and endeavour to resolve them into the primary elements or first principles which reason can discover. This part of our subject may serve the

double purpose of manifesting the procedure of the mind in its attainment of knowledge, and, at the same time, of exhibiting, in the constitution of man's nature, the most remarkable evidences of intelligent design and adaptation prior in existence to himself.

Search for an answer in facts of consciousness.

2. It is not necessary to enter upon a complete investigation of all the faculties and operations of the mind. The subject must be confined, as much as possible, to those particular topics which tend to promote the purpose we have in view.

The facts of consciousness which manifest the communication between the mind and its outward objects may perhaps be divided into two classes, —those of perception, and those of action; those by which we apprehend the qualities of external objects, and those by which we apprehend in ourselves the power of moving them or acting upon them. Not that such divisions are of any importance, except as aids in the commencement of thought. The present division, it is evident, can belong only to the last or complex operations of the mind, not to its simple faculties. When the complex mental processes are compared, and contrasted, and resolved into their elements, the same simple faculties, differently applied or combined, will be found to enter into each of them.

3. We perceive external objects,—a tree, a building. This is evidently a complex mental operation. Every object is apprehended by the mind as a combination of several distinct qualities, form, colour, &c., of which each is perceived *mediately* or *immediately* through the different senses.

Every perception of an object requires the application of three powers of the mind which may be viewed as distinct:—(1) *attention*, which is an action of the will, more or less intense, by which the mind directs itself to its object; (2) *simple perception* of the several qualities; (3) *the combination* of these qualities in one image or perception of the object, which is an act of the *understanding*.

The active powers of the mind comprise:—(1) *the will;* (2) the various *affections* which may be its motives to outward exertion.

But divisions of this kind are attended with difficulty, and are necessarily imperfect. They aim at separating in thought things which are inseparable in experience, and cannot be enunciated without employing the very terms of which it is proposed to ascertain the true meaning. It is necessary in such attempts to guard against the danger of smuggling in hypotheses under the form of words. But we may safely say, that in communication with the outward world by perception and

action, there are brought into play four mental powers which can be considered as distinct from one another:—the will, the simple perception, the understanding, and the emotional faculty. On the understanding and the affections a few brief remarks will suffice for our present purpose; on the perception and the will it will be necessary to speak more at length.

The understanding.

4. We have stated this to be the faculty which combines the isolated simple perceptions in one complex perception of an object. This is evidently a distinct faculty from that of simple perception. It is conceivable that we might gain perceptions of form, colour, hardness, yet be unable to retain and combine them. The perceptions of different senses, as well as different perceptions of the same sense, unite in every perception of an object. An intellectual process is necessary, beyond the intelligence of simple perception. The mind, in its unity of intelligence, must understand the diversity of the object, and combine its diversity in an objective unity.

This, however, is but one function of the understanding. The same term may be employed to include, in the widest sense, the power of combining several isolated representations, whether material or mental, in one perception or conception. This appears to be keeping close to the

common meaning of the word. Thus if we were sensible of a number of successive but unconnected sensations, which, from whatever cause, we could not combine in a distinct complex perception or image of an object, we might say we did not understand the appearances. Again, if a train of thoughts were presented to the mind in words, with a view to explain the force of any term, as *virtue*, *objective*, e.g. to say that we did not understand the explanation, or that our understanding had failed to apprehend the meaning of the words, would mean that we were unable to combine them in an unity of signification, which should give the meaning of the word in question.

The understanding faculty, then, is one, by whatever name it be called, which it is evident the mind must possess, to make possible the perception of an object. It must exist in it, then, prior to any complete act of perception, though it cannot be known to exist till subsequently to the perception.

The affections.

5. Under this head are included all the spontaneous movements or feelings, the instincts, passions, or emotions, which can be discovered in consciousness, and which constitute us sensitive beings. The origin of these, as of all the primary facts of our nature, is enveloped in mystery, but they may be seen to include various phænomena widely

different from one another, and arising on very different occasions. Some of them consist in the soul's sensibility to movements or affections of the corporeal organism. Such are the instincts of the lower animals. But the greater number of the spontaneous feelings have their origin in thought, that is, in the mind itself, and cannot be traced to any affection of the body; although it is possible that the body may in some way sympathize with every affection of the mind. Such are the emotions excited by the sublime and beautiful; the feelings of fear, reverence, admiration, love; the aspirations of the soul; the complacency and the remorse of conscience. All these, it is known, are frequent motives to action, and are springs of man's practical life. Considered alone, they cannot furnish the evidence of any reality external to the mind, unless we possess an original faculty of inspiration, or intellectual intuition, which receives knowledge from a superior source, or gazes immediately into the depths of being. Such a faculty might be classed among the emotions, and would be undistinguishable from them. Considered as a faculty of knowledge, it must compel assent, and be placed beyond the reach of criticism, or its authority would be liable to be questioned. We shall find, however, that the ordinary emotions of the mind, when examined by its common principles of judgment, furnish some of the most beau-

tiful and convincing evidences of the Existence of the Personal Creator.

Perception.

6. The faculties of *will* and *perception* demand more particular attention, because it is chiefly through these that the direct communication takes place between the mind and the world. It is therefore in the examination of these faculties, that we may expect to find the principles of judgment, by which we pass beyond the subjective field of consciousness; and it is evident that we must be dependent on these principles for our knowledge of the Supreme Being.

Perception is the faculty which discovers the existence of the external world. That the world exists, is what every man will affirm without hesitation or inquiry as the most unquestionable of truths. How then do we gain this knowledge, and what does it imply? The first and easiest answer is, that we know the world exists, because we see it and feel it,—because it affects our senses. The affirmation of existence is here a judgment founded upon sensation. What then is sensation? This, it is clear, must be the first question.

Sensation.

7. Take any single sensation, and, without pretending to any knowledge of real existence, we may easily trace, to a certain extent, the process by which it arises. Whatever the world may be

in itself, and whatever the ground of its distinction from the mind, it is manifest, from the comparison of different sensations, that nature must fulfil certain previous conditions in both of them, and in the relation of the one to the other to make sensation possible. Outwardly, matter must possess certain properties or powers; inwardly, the mind must be capable of receiving impressions from without, or must possess *sensibility;* and the two must be in some way mutually related to one another. The two former statements need no illustration; and on the last it is enough to remark, that our several senses are affected by many qualities of bodies, wholly different from one another; colour, for instance, different from hardness, and in no way commensurable with it. We have therefore no reason to believe that the sensibility of the mind of man exhausts the properties of matter, or is percipient of all possible forms of existence in space. Other senses might make new discoveries, no less surprising than the sense of sight to one who had been born blind. It is even conceivable that substances may exist contiguous to us in space, yet be as nothing to us, because its properties bear no relation to the sensibility.

The mind is not however affected directly by the external world, but through the medium of the body, or rather of the nervous organism. It is

here that that communication takes place between mind and matter, which it is proverbial to speak of as an impenetrable mystery. If we commence from without, and endeavour to pass from matter to sensation, we perceive that the connexion is dependent upon the constitution of the nervous system, and of the organs of sense. To say nothing of the eye and ear, and their beautiful adaptations to their proper purposes, it is well known that the various nerves possess in themselves some mysterious property, which renders them susceptible of their peculiar impressions;—the optic nerve only of light, the acoustic nerve of sound, the nerves of touch of their own feelings alone. This is shown in a remarkable example by Sir Charles Bell,—"When surgeons perform the operation of couching, the point of the needle gives the sensation of pricking, which is an exercise of the nerve of touch, when it passes through the outer coat of the eye; but when it passes through the retina, which is the expanded nerve of vision, and forms the internal coat of the eye, it gives the sensation as if a spark of fire had been produced. The nerve of vision is as insensible to touch, as the nerve of touch is insensible to light[1]." Whether this peculiar susceptibility of the different nerves depends upon their physical construction, or

[1] "The Hand," p. 188.

upon their connexion with the brain, or upon something beyond either of these, it may be impossible to determine with certainty. It may be conjectured that there is a transmission of physical impressions through the filaments to the brain, and a resulting action of the brain itself; but what may be the nature of these movements, and whether the mind is in proximate connexion with the nervous extremities, or only with the terminations of the nerves in the brain, cannot easily be ascertained[2]. If the different sensations are produced in different parts of the sensorium, and depend, in any degree, upon a different physical constitution of the parts, it is probable that the nerves must also possess each of them its peculiar property.

Starting then from without, we find that sensation originates in some physical action, or course of physical actions, and is dependent both upon the outward cause, and upon the peculiar properties of the nerves. But we can never pass from these causes to the sensation itself.

If, on the contrary, we commence from within, and observe the internal sensations of the mind,

[2] Dr. Roget considers the brain to be "the organ of which the physical affections are immediately attended by that change in the percipient being which we term *sensation*," and the nerves to be like "a system of electric telegraphs for the instantaneous transmission of sensorial agencies." Bridgewater Treatise, Part iii. Chap. i. There is here a very interesting account of the Physiology of Perception.

differing from one another in various ways, and never produced at random, but according to regular and constant rules, we conclude that there is a certain relation between the product in feeling, and the outward physical action which occasions it; but what that relation is, what may be the connexion between the impression and the feeling, how the one leads to the other, or excites the nerve with its peculiar property to produce the other, it is impossible to understand. It appears certain that the *physical* actions, in their intricate minuteness, go beyond all power of art to follow them; else why the infinitesimal complexities of the organism? It is no less certain, that however we may revolve and ponder the mental sensation, we can never pass from it by any process of thought, and arrive by a continuous course at a physical phænomenon.

This observation may illustrate the value of theories which pretend to identify thought with existence. Until such theories can commence from the thought and descend to the outward action, or commence from the outward action and ascend upwards to the thought, we shall be justified in regarding such attempts as mere evasions of the difficulty; and in maintaining that whatever mind be, and whatever matter be, there is, to man, an impassable gulf between their fields of phænomena.

BOOK I. CHAP. III.

We return then to the consideration of perception.

Perception.

8. Simple perception is an act of consciousness, in which the mind is cognizant of the qualities of external bodies. The perception of any quality requires the fulfilment of certain conditions, which may be viewed, like the conditions of sensation, with reference (1) to the object, and (2) to the perceiving mind.

(1.) *In the object* the essential conditions may be reduced to two, diversity in space or time, and permanence in time. There must be diversity in the qualities of matter to excite attention. One incessant unchanging sensation could never be accompanied with perception through any one of the senses [3]. And each quality must remain permanent for some definite period of time. We can conceive the possibility of a world in which the physical properties of matter should be so changing, and the impressions upon our sensitive organs so fugitive and confused, that experience would be impossible. In such a world we might have continual sensations; but could no more gain a single perception, than we can perceive distinct colours upon a rapidly revolving circle.

[3] "Sentire semper idem, et non sentire ad idem recidunt," a remark of Hobbes', quoted by Sir W. Hamilton, conveys a self-evident truth.

(2.) *The perceiving mind* brings into action in perception faculties which are not essential to mere sensation. These are nothing less than the will, and the intelligence or reason. If there were no action of the will, we might be sensible of bare impressions, but could never refer them to an outward object. In such a case there could be no distinction of the self from the object. This distinction may be seen to have its ultimate ground as a fact of knowledge, in a comparison of sensation with will, instituted by a spontaneous action of the mind, in the commencement of its conscious life. Intelligence observes, takes up, and appropriates the distinction. Not that the action of the mind is so complex as the description of it, or necessarily a conscious exertion. But there must be some attention, however remiss, in every perception; and this is an act of will. In the perception of *known* objects, where the memory comes in to the aid of the observing faculties, this attention may be so slight and easy as to be unnoticed; but we are more conscious of it in the perception of qualities with which we are unfamiliar.

These observations may be illustrated by the early life of an infant. Simple sensation is, beyond doubt, the first mental phænomenon. The light, or some bright colour excites attention; and attention is stimulated by an innate disposition of the mind itself, something like the love of novelty which

continues through life. The first sensations must be confused and indistinct; the first effect of that attention, which is thus excited by the pleasure of sensation, (and possibly by other causes) must be to sharpen the impressions, and to separate them. Thus the will comes into play before a definite perception can be attained. A mind with sensibility, but without activity, if it be possible in the nature of things, would, at the most, be sensible of an ever-changing succession of colours and impressions, but could gain no conception of an object, and would be incapable of what we call experience. It would never gain that knowledge in which a child, as soon as it can speak, shows itself sensible of the distinction between, "This is I," and "This is not I."

But attention can give no perception unless it be intelligent. Perception is an intelligent energy, by which the mind apprehends the qualities delivered to it, as belonging to objects external to itself.

Thus the developed mind, whether it learn to perceive by the slow process of observation and comparison, or, as is known of certain animals[4], possess from birth the whole apprehension of distance, may be said to have immediate perception of external, and even of distant objects; although this perception is often effected through a causal

[4] Sir W. Hamilton on Reid, p. 182.

process of several steps, and a complex action of the mind itself. To call this an immediate perception may seem to be a contradiction in terms. But it is mediate from one point of view, and immediate from another. It is mediate with reference to the laws of matter, but immediate with reference to the action of the mind. In the former view, it appears to be always mediate, for even in the case of touch, there is a transmission of force through the cuticle to the nerve, and it would seem also, through the nerve to the brain, before sensation can take place. But the distinct faculties of the mind combine in one conscious energy, and the intelligence runs at a bound through a series of causes, perceiving none of them but the one to which nature would have it look. It does this in the sight of a distant and in the touch of a near object. There is an action of intelligence, and a spontaneous inference in both cases. The universal and decided testimony of consciousness, shows that the mind is wont, by a single and instantaneous energy, to perceive a large portion of a distant object, and to perceive it as distant, without being obliged to gather up the elements of the perception one by one, or to estimate the distance by an inference founded on the appearances.

Perception, then, is an act of the mind combining three irresolvable powers,—the sensibility, the will, and the reason,—in one simple energy. We

are accustomed to regard these faculties as distinct, but they are never isolated in their application. They may combine in various ways in energies of the mind which are regarded as simple and indivisible, but are resolved into their simpler parts by comparing the different energies with one another.

The will.

9. The will therefore is the one active power of the mind, which combines with other powers, and communicates to them their activity. It may be defined to be the faculty which is apprehended in the consciousness, as the originating power of the personal self. Not that it can be seen to be an absolute power of self-origination: it is possible that it may always be determined by subtile forces which do not fall within the sphere of consciousness. But so far as apprehension can reach, the phænomena of the will appear to have their origin in an activity of the personal self.

Action differs then in two essential particulars from perception. First,—there is "a distinct personal consciousness" of exertion, *prior* to some phænomenon in the world; whereas perception is not preceded by any internal consciousness of the means by which it is attained, except the consciousness of attention, which is itself an act of the will[5]. Secondly,—in action, the character of the

[5] "Power has reference to something consequent, susceptibility to

phænomenon appears as dependent on the mental exertion, whereas that of the perception is independent of any power of the self. The power of the mind to lend or withhold its attention has no effect upon the world. "When in broad daylight I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view[6]." In action, on the contrary, I am able to determine particular results by my exertion.

Thus the two processes are, in some respects, the converse of each other. The occasion of perception is external, and the direction of its process inwards from the extremities of the nerves. The occasion of any action is internal, and its direction outwards. It is in accordance with these obvious facts, that the sensitive and motor nerves are now known to be distinct from one another.

Simple faculties.

10. We are thus led to the conclusion that there are four mental powers, or classes of mental powers, each of which can be conceived as original, simple, irresolvable;—the sensibility, the emotional faculty, the will and the intelligence or reason. Of the reason we shall have occasion to speak again, and shall see that it may

something antecedent." Chalmers' Bridgewater Treatise, vol. ii. p. 221.

[6] Berkeley on "Human Knowledge," Art. xxix.

be regarded as the same faculty with that by which the mind combines its simple perceptions in the perception of an object, and which has been denominated the understanding. The sensibility is sometimes included with the affections, and the mind is then said to possess the three powers of reason or understanding, will, and affections. But the sensibility to the impressions of the material world appears to have as good claim to be considered a distinct faculty from the spontaneous affections or moral emotions of the mind, as the intelligence to be distinguished from the will.

SECTION II.

ORIGIN OF ALL KNOWLEDGE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FACTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS BY THE REASON.

Knowledge of self and world.

11. From the self-evident facts of consciousness, we recur to the inquiry into their meaning, or the validity of the knowledge they deliver us of real existence,—whether of oneself, or of the world. These are the two simplest and most elementary facts of knowledge. They are the first definite knowledges[7] of existing things which the mind attains; and are universally received as such by the common sense of mankind. We are to consider their validity, with a view to ascertain, if possible, the

[7] "*Knowledges*, in common use with Bacon and our English philosophers till after the time of Locke, ought not to be discarded." Sir W. Hamilton on Reid, p. 763.

principles which must guide us in the examination of our ulterior knowledge of the Infinite Being.

Incomparably the most profound and learned, and, at the same time, exact discussion of these questions, in the English, or probably any other language, is to be found in the Dissertations of Sir W. Hamilton. His answer, if we may state it apart from his investigations, is to this effect;—that "to suppose the falsehood of these first cognitions, is to suppose that we are created capable of intelligence in order to be made the victims of delusion; that God is a deceiver, and the root of our nature a lie[8]." And again;—"we believe that what we are compelled to perceive as not-self, is not a perception of self, in reliance on the original necessity of so believing impressed on us by nature[9].

"*Quæ nisi sit veri ratio quoque falsa fit omnis.*" He appeals then to the natural conviction of mankind, and maintains that we have, not a mediate or inferred, but an immediate knowledge of the *non-ego* as distinguished from the *ego*.

But the nature of our inquiry precludes all appeal to the truth of the Creator. It demands a philosophy established on an independent basis, and requires us to regard the existence of the

[8] Reid, Diss. p. 743, also 745.

[9] Ib. p. 750.

Supreme Being, as the highest and final truth which philosophy is to investigate and establish. And it appears possible to ask the questions,—whether their knowledge of the world's existence be not, in the common judgment of men, prior to their knowledge of the Creator, and an elementary truth which needs no other for its support;—and whether moral discipline, the work of man, and moral probation, the purpose of life, may not be accomplished, as far as we can judge, in a world of appearance, adapted, in whatever way, to correspondence with the actions of the will, as effectually as in an independently existing world; and, consequently the truth of God be no more compromised by any theory of material existence, than in the old question respecting the real and apparent motions of the universe?

But, however this be, it seems certain that the appeal to the truth of the Creator, in verification of these primitive decisions of the mind, is inadmissible as a basis of our present inquiry. We are in search of the evidences of His existence, or the principles on which they rest, and are therefore precluded from assuming that truth which is itself the origin of all truth.

Appeal to common sense.

12. But the final appeal to the common sense of men is quite admissible. They who deny the truth, that there is a God above us, will generally

admit without question that there is a world without us. But the two truths are equally the common products of human judgment; and it will be very material to show that the knowledge of God, as a really existing Being, rests on the same foundation, is discovered by the same principles of reason, and has as good warrant to be considered objectively valid as the knowledge of oneself and of the world.

The mind and the world in mutual relation.

13. Let us see what is the foundation of this inferior knowledge. We observe that in the facts of consciousness there are certain ultimate and inexplicable distinctions. It is evident that our knowledge of being, whether of the *ego* or of the *non-ego*, must be in some way dependent upon these distinctions. Let us pay attention to the facts of perception and action, which discover the great distinction between sensibility and will. In perception we are sensible of certain impressions produced by means which are very imperfectly known. In action every movement is attended by a feeling of exertion. We cannot follow the channels which connect an object with a perception, or a volition with an action; but there is a palpable difference in the consciousness between the facts of sensibility and those of will, a difference which cannot be got rid of, and which leads to an inevitable result in our knowledge.

On this difference, then, the cognition of the *ego* and the *non-ego*, the mind and the world as distinct from one another, is in some way dependent. If we observe our thoughts, we may see that it is not true that every single fact of consciousness discovers to us that we exist. Doubtless every fact implies existence. That which feels exists, and that which wills exists; but feeling alone, will alone, will not make it cognizant of its being. The personal existence of the *ego* is not apprehended by intelligence till the mind is active as well as sensitive, and perceives the effect of its exertion in the world.

As the will, then, discovers to us the existence of self so soon as its effects upon matter are rendered to us through perception, so, for the same reason, does the sensibility assure us of the not-self. Feeling alone, will alone, could discover neither the one nor the other; both are discovered through the mind's comparison of will with feeling. It can then be seen that perception is a complex action of the mind, involving both will and sensibility, and interpreted by the reason; an action which may always manifest the *ego* and the *non-ego* in mutual relation to one another.

Every perception depends upon action and reaction in the nervous system. It implies an exertion, more or less intense, of the perceiving mind, and a resistance caused by the object perceived.

This is true of all the senses; not only of the touch, in which the nerve is brought into close contact with matter, but also of sight and hearing, where the waves of light or sound impinge upon the expanded nerve of the eye or ear. *The notion of power thus corresponds to the ultimate fact of knowledge which the mind can attain;* and it follows from this account of the origin of all knowledge, of the mind, and of the world, that whatever warrant we have for assigning an objective reality to the one, we have precisely the same warrant for assigning an objective reality to the other.

The mind then, as that which wills and perceives, exists apart from the matter which resists the will and is perceived. Not that they can be known to be distinct from one another, or from all continued dependence on a Superior Being, in the deep reality of their nature. This would be going very far beyond our sphere. The depths of being are unfathomable by any faculty of man. But they are distinct at least as immediate preceding causes of the facts of consciousness; and, beyond this, must be considered as possessing equal claims to independence.

Fundamental cognition of power.

14. Thus the notion of power may be said to be no mere subjective conception, but an immediate cognition of the *ego* and *non-ego* in mutual rela-

BOOK I. CHAP. III.

tion: and it appears that in *causality* the mind has a principle of universal application, which can lay claim to objective validity[1]. It is through a causal process in nature that intelligence is awakened to life, and the first knowledge attained of the distinction between the mind and the world. This causal process can be traced, in all sensation, through several steps; but whether few or many, the mind has in all cases an immediate perception of its own power in that action and reaction with forces from without, which takes place in the nervous organism or in the brain.

EXPERIENCE. Innate mental powers.

15. Hence we may be able to understand the question, so often discussed, so seldom enunciated with distinctness, yet of so much importance in all inquiries into existence, Does all knowledge originate in experience? In one sense this may be affirmed to be true. For even the simple faculties are not awakened to life, *à priori* conceptions are not brought into possession, unless through a communication of the mind with the outward world. Strictly speaking it cannot be said that any of the faculties are innate. The mind is not destitute of natural tendencies like the *tabula rasa* of Locke; but neither has it innate faculties completely formed, though undiscovered, as might be implied

[1] See Appendix.

if we were to press too far Leibnitz's comparison of it to the figure of Hercules, marked out by natural veins in the unhewn block of marble[2]; much less has it finished, though latent, *à priori* conceptions, as Kant's philosophy would seem to imply. It must have, unquestionably, its innate tendencies or capacities, which may possibly be such in themselves, that they cannot be drawn out in any other way than to form the common faculties of human beings. But how far they correspond to the developed powers, how far any faculty can be called innate, how far the formation of them is dependent on the mind's early life in the world, it must be impossible to ascertain. It is conceivable that the character of the sensibility and intelligence may be determined by this *primary experience*, and might have been differently drawn out in a different world.

There must be present at the commencement of life a certain sensitivity to impressions of various kinds, but this may not be identical with the sensibility of common experience. It seems certain, however, that, with its present organism, the mind must be restricted to certain specific qualities of sensibility. The various nervous sensations have their special character. The nerve of sight is unsusceptible, except to light; the acoustic nerve,

[2] Leibnitz, Op. p. 196. Nouv. Ess. Av.-prop.

except to sound. It would seem then, that, with the nervous system of man, the senses could not, in any other world, have been different from what they are. They must have lain dormant, unless furnished with their proper outward occasions of sensibility.

Yet it cannot be known to be necessary in the nature of things, that intelligence must be confined to an organism of a particular conformation, and which is capable only of certain special sensations. Much less can it be assumed that the human faculties and necessary forms of thought, are the only possible developments of the innate qualities of the soul.

Primary experience.

16. But we may know that the mind, prior to that experience by which, in its developed condition, it gains its knowledge through outward observation, has its faculties awakened by means of a spontaneous communication with the world, and emerges to the common experience of life ready furnished, not only with the ability to learn what it may be taught, but with certain universal principles, which must guide and govern it in all it can learn. These are its *à priori* principles of judgment, its principles of common sense, its necessary truths, received therefore not on belief, but through a compulsion of nature. From the commencement of life the mind acts and reacts in

a mysterious manner with the world around, and is excited by this action, and by its own innate affections, to certain processes of spontaneous thought, which furnish it with certain principles of judgment and facts of knowledge, founded upon its original relation to the world, and to be carried along with it in all subsequent experience. Having gained the full possession of its intelligence, it is able to look back to the past, and then sees that knowledge, though wholly dependent upon experience for the occasions of its growth, must be referred, however, to nature for its causes. Knowledge springs up naturally out of being, but needs culture for its improvement. It is at first the unavoidable consequence of the mind's existence in the world, and depends on the constitution and frame of both.

It is easy to see that in some branches the knowledge and personal character of man are dependent upon contingent circumstances. His moral nature, it is unquestionable, may degenerate from age to age. It may also be improved and elevated. Hence it must be unfair to draw a general conclusion respecting the innate mental powers, from the degenerate types of humanity. Other branches of knowledge are such that to present them to the mind is to secure its uniform adherence, and to develope its faculties in one uniform way. Yet even here, where the causes of knowledge rest in nature, the experience-occasions

may be withheld, and man may intellectually, as well as morally, be degraded to the beasts that perish.

Primary experience, then, may denote that mysterious communication between the mind and the world, which awakens the faculties of the mind, and supplies its facts of consciousness and its fundamental knowledges, but is beyond the reach of consciousness. It is the early experience of a child, but it also lies at the root of all the common experience of human life.

It appears, then, that the mind, at the commencement of life and previously to this first experience, ought not to be compared, as by Locke, to a sheet of blank paper; nor yet, as by Kant, to a sheet written all over with hieroglyphics. It would seem to resemble, not so much the manufactured paper, as the pulp of which it is to consist; this, however, not lying in a shapeless mass, but spread out in a wonderful machine, which proceeds at once to roll the sheet and to impress upon it indelible characters. To complete the comparison, we may imagine the pulp and the machine to possess, each of them, certain chymical properties, or, through the agency of a Wise Designer, to be imprinted with certain chymical substances which have an affinity for one another.

Who made us thus?

17. Can the mind evade the inevitable questions, Who prepared the pulp? Who made the

machine? Who imparted to them their properties, and adapted them so perfectly to one another, as to fit them for evolving that wonderful world of beauty and moral goodness, of intelligence and love, which the mind of man claims for its domain? Having looked back thus far from its present experience to its natural education, can the reason be interdicted all question as to the *beyond?* Can it be held in check by atheism with its mock professions of humility? It cannot help replying, The nature which has developed it into being with the power of asking questions, thereby encourages it to inquire. The legitimacy of the questions and the true answer, will be considered in subsequent chapters.

The reason or intelligence.

18. Some observations may now be made on the intellectual faculty. In its return from the first cognition of power or cause, the mind perceives that all its knowledge is gained by means of the unresolvable, inexplicable, original faculty,—the Reason or Intelligence. Without this there might be sensation, but there could be no ascription of the sensation to a cause, no perception of an outward quality. Intelligence, then, enters into the first act of perception, and continues in every subsequent mental process, whether in the observation of the outward world, or in the reflex observation of the mind itself.

The faculty which combines the simple perceptions, and so gives the knowledge of complex objects, has been called the understanding. It is an energy of the mind as intelligent. It is an ultimate fact of knowledge, that the mind is conscious of itself as unity, of the world as diversity. The outward world is seen as diverse through the various sensations, but is bound in certain relations —those of space—which are independent of the perceiving subject. The mind requires a cause, external to itself, of the constant representation of unity in diversity, no less than of the representation of different qualities. The reason, therefore, in virtue of its causal principle, refers these relations to the object. Precisely as the intelligence refers the single perception to an external cause, so it refers the combination of perceptions to one object. The understanding is thus the same faculty with the reason, but in certain particular applications.

In this view then the mind may be said to have immediate perception of all the qualities of bodies which directly affect the senses, and not only of the qualities, but of the object itself as a combination of the qualities. Its attention is awakened by the affections of its organism, produced by the physical movements of sensation; and then the intelligence runs at a bound through the causal processes, and refers each single sensation to the

outward cause presented to it by nature, and the subjective union of sensations to an objective union in the world.

But the intelligence rises above the perception of objects to that of the visible universe, and above the world of matter to that of man as an intelligent, sensitive, and moral agent. It perceives and appreciates, in the visible universe, the adaptation of means to ends; in the moral world, the relations of eternal right. It looks backward in life from thought to being, and interprets the deliverances of consciousness; it looks forward in the world of action, and disposes with contrivance and design. In perception, reason interprets the meaning; in action, it supplies the purpose. It is the faculty by which the mind gains the first elements of knowledge, and by which it rises to the highest knowledge of which man is capable. And as in the first the notion of causation is its ultimate principle, so the same principle is carried along with it to the last. It is by its use of the principle of causality that reason is distinguished from feeling. Whether it pass from premises to conclusions, or from causes to effects, or back from effects to causes; whether it investigate the first principles of knowledge, or follow them out to their consequences, it always assumes the universal law of causality, and judges by it.

But in its lowest, and in its highest movements,

it may be discriminated with difficulty from the spontaneous affections. The first knowledges of the mind are sometimes said to rest on faith or feeling. The happy guesses of genius, its flashes of thought and imagination, are often as spontaneous as the feelings. They show the soul to be in possession of treasures which it has not reckoned. But feelings may enlighten, or may delude. Reason, intelligence claims the right to examine and to decide. It discerns between the true and the false; it weighs the pretended gold, and rings it, and proves it to be genuine before it counts it among its treasures. It possesses many truths which came at first with the spontaneity of the emotions, but have since been examined and proved by searching tests. Such are its own being, and the moral law; such is its highest and universal truth, that man is the creature of a Personal Creator.

All immediate knowledge is relative.

19. A few observations are requisite, with reference to the extent and validity of knowledge.

All immediate knowledge, it will be seen, is relative, and is of phænomena, not of real being. Our cognitions extend to the effects of which the causes are beyond our reach. They cannot penetrate the mystery of being, but are confined to its manifestations.

But though nature has prescribed impassable

limits to our immediate knowledge, yet we are not wholly shut up within the internal and subjective field. The intelligent principle of causality irresistibly bears us beyond it to an objective universe, which contains both the self and the world. This principle gives us, it is true, no information of either the one or the other considered in itself, but it assures us of the fact that *they are*, and compels us to infer *diversities in their real nature, corresponding to the diversities of appearance.*

Matter is known through its properties, as that which affects the sensibility. It is visible, tangible, extended; mind is that which feels, and wills, and thinks; but the essential nature of either of them; what it may be to beings different from man in sensibility or intelligence; what it may be in itself, or as it must be known to perfect intelligence, must be to man quite incomprehensible. But that mind really exists as the subject of certain powers, and matter as the subject of properties,—this is an unavoidable cognition.

We live then in a world of phænomena and relations, which, from our mental constitution, we cannot help regarding as manifestations of actual realities. We pass spontaneously from the appearances to their causes, although these in themselves can never be known. So irresistible is the force of nature in this respect, that the common sense of mankind is accustomed to confuse the mental im-

pression with its outward cause, and to comprise the two in one complex notion of an object, which cannot without thought and attention be resolved into its simple elements.

Mediate knowledge of real being.

20. It appears then that though we cannot have an immediate knowledge of real being, yet we may be said to know it mediately in its manifestations. Cognition of the effect is thus in all human knowledge tantamount to cognition of the cause; for the cause is known in and by the effect. It can be regarded as cause only so far as its potency is thus expressed and discovered, and may therefore be said to be adequately measured by the effect, and to be thus mediately known.

Pure being is in itself not only unknown but inconceivable. Without action or manifestation, it is, to man at least, equivalent to non-being, for it cannot possibly become known. But whatever is to man existent, whatever is done or manifested, involves power proportionate to the result or appearance, and must be referred to its adequate cause.

Although then the causes of phænomena may be in themselves inscrutable, yet we are compelled to know and distinguish them by their effects. Whatever be the differences of real being, like effects imply a like cause, unlike effects must have causes which are unlike. Things can never be known to be

totally like or unlike in their whole nature, because we can have only a partial knowledge of any thing; we can only say that they are like or unlike, so far as their reality is mediately known, that is so far as they are objects *to us*.

And this is all the knowledge which can be of use to us, either for the welfare of life, or for its religious ends. It is not necessary to comprehend the secret nature of things before we can apply them usefully. We need not know what electricity is, to employ it as a means of communication. We do not want a perfect knowledge of the nature of wood,—the secret processes of vegetation by which it has grown, the inward causes and molecular conditions on which its properties depend,—for the construction of the roof of a house. It is possible enough that such an insight into the secret nature of things, might save us a vast amount of labour and difficulty. It is conceivable that other beings may possess some penetrating sense, by which they can know at sight, and without experience, all the properties of any material substance. We might have been endowed with an immediate perception of the electric fluid, and not dependent on some accident for its discovery, after it had eluded observation for thousands of years. There may be beings who can see it immediately in nature, and perhaps can no more avoid the sight of it than the open eyes of man can avoid

the sunshine. There may be beings in the universe who have employed it for ages past, as it is now applied by man, and to whom it may even be the ordinary medium of communication, as to man the air is the medium of sound.

But we cannot tell how far such knowledge would be consistent with the design of the Creator in our existence here. Individual or social progress is through the toil and patience of experience. Moreover it is not difficult to see that to press the question of the essence of things to its limits, is in fact to ask what is the exact process of creation. It is to demand a full comprehension of creative agency, which would be tantamount to the power to create. The theist will easily believe that this is more than man can ever attain, either in this life or in any other.

Course of the inquiry.

21. From a theology founded on the foregoing principles, (12—20,) the atheist may find an outlet in total scepticism. If it be demonstrated that our knowledge of the Supreme Being is as valid, and not less inadequate than that of an external world, he may then have the hardihood to affirm that both knowledges are illusive, and all philosophy impossible. He may deny that we have as yet attained any strict cognition either of the soul or of the world, as dependent or independent in existence. We see indeed,—this is indisputable,

that the world is not dependent in existence upon that conscious energy of the soul which we call will. But may it not be evolved by a spontaneous energy of our nature, lying beyond the reach of consciousness, and independent of the will? The springing up of our own existence, it may be alleged, is beyond the consciousness and out of the sphere of the volition. Or again, the materialist may assign real existence to matter, and make mind to be but a certain evolution from it, or a happy result of organization. Or he may affirm that many conceivable theories have not been confuted.

Granted. We profess to find in the foregoing observations a basis for the demonstration that our knowledge of the Infinite Being, is as valid as that of the finite. If the question be pressed farther, it must be admitted assuredly that the depths of being are unfathomable. Whether, in the absolute nature of things, the mind is wholly distinct from the world or in any way related to it, is beyond the province of man's intelligence. It cannot be seen how things which do appear flow forth from the fountain of existence. The only course which remains open, in dealing with this total scepticism, is to consider the various theories of existence (or nonentity) which have amused or perplexed the world; and to examine whether any of them be a reasonable account of evident facts. We shall find

perhaps that to deny the existence of either the self, the world, or the Creator, is to involve ourselves in endless absurdities. We may find that the only consistent alternative of theism is nihilism, and the atheist must then be left to take his choice.

We are thus brought to an important branch of our subject, which will next engage our attention,—the examination of different theories of existence, and different systems of unbelief. The direct arguments of theism will form the subject of Book II.

CHAPTER IV.

SPECULATIVE THEORIES OF EXISTENCE.

Aim of theories.

1. A THEORY of existence professes to account for the phænomena of nature, by referring them to their first or independent cause or causes. Many such theories have been current, differing from one another both in principles and in pretensions. The most opposite of them have been pressed into the service of atheism, some as remarkable for dogmatism, as others for their professions of doubtfulness and humility. Some thinkers will profess to understand the whole mystery of being, and through immediate intuition of the absolute, to comprehend the infinite field of Eternal Truth, within the mind of a creature of yesterday. Others profess themselves overwhelmed by the immensity of nature, and sunk in silent awe, pronounce it audacious to interpret her mysterious language, or to affirm, since she is so powerful and so majestic, that she can be subject to a Creator

and Governor. Her marvellous variety has no effect upon them but to excite amazement: her wonderful works serve only to fill the mind with wonder: her vast design is a riddle far too difficult and complicated for man to solve. But professions of humility are often the cloak of pride, and the bold theory is wont to lurk beneath the modest doubt.

Mind and matter have at least an apparent, that is, a dependent existence. The question is,—What existence is independent? Where is the fountain of life? Where the real and absolute which is the basis of the phænomenal?

Of the theories which have been proposed in answer, we shall briefly indicate the most obvious, and then examine such as are commonly made the basis of infidelity.

Speculative theories.

2. The possible answers may be divided into four classes, and these again into several distinct systems. They may be represented as follows:—

I. ATHEISM; which assigns independent existence to

1. The self, or mind.
2. The material world.
3. Both the mind and matter.
4. Neither of them; which is nihilism.

II. PANTHEISM; which professes to acknowledge an eternal self-existent Being, but either

1. Identifies its god with the known universe, or
2. Makes mind and matter to be necessary evolutions, and inseparable parts of his nature.

III. SPURIOUS THEISM; which attributes independent existence to God, together with

Self-existent spirits.

Self-existent matter.

Self-existent spirits and matter.

IV. MONOTHEISM; which affirms the existence of One God, of Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, by Whom all things exist. It becomes

CHRISTIAN THEISM; when its view of the Divine Character is consistent with that exhibited in the Old and New Testaments, and especially in the doctrines of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

These systems may be seen to be subject to numerous modifications and subdivisions. The limits of I. and II. are often difficult to be defined. The theories II. (2.) sometimes verge upon III.

Monotheism and Christian Theism affirm both mind and matter to be created; but whether they now exist independently, or dependently—through the power communicated once for all in the origin of an accomplished creation, or by the continued operation of the Creator, is a question on which

Christians think differently. On the former hypothesis we may have theories which ascribe present independent existence to either (1.) mind alone, or (2.) matter alone.

(1.) If to mind alone,—the existence of matter may be conceived to consist, (*a*) in its representation by the spontaneous energy of the mind, but according to laws impressed by the Creator. This is absolute, but not atheistic idealism. Or, (*b*) matter may be a representation to the mind of man, through the continued Divine agency, which is Berkeley's theory. He might have maintained the mind itself to be in present existence either independent or dependent on the First Cause. The existence of matter is, in this theory, dependent both upon that of the infinite and that of finite minds.

(2.) Matter alone may be conceived to exist independently by creation, and to give rise to the existence of mind through the action of divinely-ordained laws. This appears to be the opinion of some speculative physiologists, and is not necessarily fatal either to their theism or their Christianity. But it seems to tremble on the verge of atheism; at least unless it hold a very refined and spiritual theory of material existence. To regard gross visible matter as prior in being to the mind of man, and as evolving it by natural laws, may be inconsistent with its subordination to the Divine mind.

These divisions and subdivisions are formed, it will be evident, with reference only to conceptions, and can impose no limitation on the possibilities of things. They are affirmed objectively true, when they are made the bases of infidel systems.

3. Of these conceivable systems we shall consider:—

I. The atheistic systems of (1) idealism; (2) and (3) materialism. The fourth division deserves no further notice. Nihilists are not to be reasoned with.

II. Systems of pantheism.

IV. The foundations of true theism will engage our subsequent inquiries.

The theories of III. are in this country matters of mere speculative curiosity. They are all found in Hindu systems of philosophy[1]. The second of this class was in former times very prevalent in the world. It has generally originated in speculative attempts to account for the existence of evil. But Manichæan and kindred schemes are at present little likely to be revived[2]. They are confuted by the direct evidences of theism.

[1] Of which some account may be found in Schlegel's Philosophy of History, Lect. vi.

[2] These theories generally represent eternal matter as independent of the Supreme Being. It is not generally observed that matter is not necessarily independent because eternal. A Being who exists eternally may be conceived eternally to create subordinate beings, who exist through His continued operation.

SECTION I.

IDEALISM.

BOOK I. CHAP. IV. Account of it.

4. Idealism finds its *real being* in mind, and regards the material world as mere appearance. The mind not only gives the colouring, but creates the whole substance of that picture of the universe which is spread before it. It is a picture of marvellous sublimity and beauty to the eye, but is not really a picture spread out in the expanse of space, and always the same though there be no mind to behold it.

Something, it is evident, is due to the mind itself. There can be no picture without the light, and what is light till it has touched the sensibility? It is known to be a subtile ether, which can have but a physical action on the nerve of sight. By a sense sufficiently acute, light will be perceived as an elastic fluid medium pervading all space, and undulating in waves which vary, it is said, from the thirty-seven-thousandth to the sixty-thousandth part of an inch in length, according to the different colours which they exhibit through the eye of man; and are propagated through space with the velocity of twelve millions of miles in a minute. The ether itself is, from its tenuity, as far beyond the reach of perception through the senses of the body, as the speed of its transmission exceeds the conception of the mind. Even to a mind and organ

of sight in other respects human, but sensitive to impressions of infinitesimal duration, light would no longer appear continuous, but would be a rapid succession of sparks, possibly of differently coloured sparks. And it would not be seen as uniform light, but as rays or sparks perhaps thinly scattered in the darkness; like certain leaves and other substances, which appear of uniform colour to the naked eye, but which the microscope discovers to owe their colour to discrete particles diffused through their structure.

If the same mind be conceived to possess another organ of sense, which could perceive the luminiferous medium itself as its object, the light to such a sense would no longer be light at all. It is through the peculiar action of the optic nerve that the mind receives the sensation of light. Through a sense which could perceive the ether itself, it would appear perhaps like a multitude of minute objects, no longer luminous, in space. The mind would need to be furnished with another organism, and would require another luminiferous medium to throw light upon the light.

The mind contributes to all knowledge.

5. It is the mind which sees; the mind which translates the movements of a vibrating medium into the sensations of light and colour. All is darkness without the mind. There is no picture of visible nature, unless the mind be there to

behold it. It is like an invisible photograph, which wants the requisite agent to bring it out, or like a chymical picture, which is rendered visible by the heat of the fire. It is brought out by the vital warmth, and fixed by the chymics of the living soul.

To the perception of the outward world then, something, it is evident, is contributed by the mind itself; something comes from without. The mind cannot be regarded as merely passive. It is not only active in giving its attention, but has also an unconscious activity in receiving its impressions.

But may not the perceiving mind be the creator of its whole world of perception? It gives the light and colouring to nature's picture, may it not be the author also of the outline or shape, and of the invisible network which receives the colouring? Mind, it is true, is distinguished from matter, so far as we can see, by the facts of the will; yet of that which is known as matter, something we see comes from the mind's sensibility. May not this faculty be the origin of the whole? May not all the laws and appearances of nature be evolved from a spontaneous action of the soul, according to the laws of its being? May not life be a self-consistent dream? It is a supposable theory of existence, and one not to be refuted by arguments, nor quite evaded on any theory of perception. We

have an immediate knowledge of the self and the world; but so long as it is only relative, till we can descend beneath phænomena to realities, we are open to the question, May not the *non-ego* be presented by the mind to itself, and the act of perception a relation between one faculty and another?

This is the theory of egoistical idealism. It is too subtile when fully apprehended, too absurd when superficial, to furnish a popular system of atheism. It cannot, like materialism, be spun into plausible theories, which seem to explain every thing while they explain nothing. It therefore deserves attention rather as the antagonist and corrective of materialism, than as dangerous on its own account.

Atheistic form.

6. In its atheistic form it is irretrievably absurd. For it implies that the solitary thinker is himself the sole existing being in the universe. He is God and the universe in his own person. Every thing else is a mere vision; all mankind, in all the movements of life and history, nothing but the phantoms of his own brain! As soon as he discovers himself to be not the only existent being, but one of a multitude, he has ground for believing in a Creator of human nature, Who is the Ordainer of its common faculties of self-development and observation.

7. Since the simple and elementary knowledge of the existence of other men rests on principles in many respects similar to that of the existence of the Deity; and since atheists frequently maintain their scepticism on principles, which, if applied consistently, would lead them to deny that other men exist, a few brief remarks on this topic will not be inappropriate.

That other men exist, is one of the truths which may be said to be as certainly known as one's own existence. This knowledge is a very early result of observation. It is prior, in fact, to the determinate notion of self, and always remains beyond the reach of scepticism. The existence of the world may be denied, except as mere appearance, of which the causes are in the mind or in some superior mind: the existence of the mind may be resolved into a flux of ideas and impressions; but no scepticism can withstand the conviction, that there are many such fluxes besides oneself. This fact may be said to be as certain as the subjective facts of consciousness.

If we inquire how this knowledge is first obtained, we shall find it difficult to make any other answer than that it is through the mind's spontaneous use of the principle of causality, applied in innumerable instances, which mutually confirm and strengthen one another. It would be ludicrous to attempt the formal proof of any thing so original

and simple; but if demonstration were required, it might be found in comparing the various consequences and appearances in the outward world which arise from the existence of oneself, with the similar appearances and actions which we ascribe to others. Or the truth might first be *assumed* and then *established*, like the laws of motion in dynamics, by the consistency of endless results in which it is assumed. If this did not satisfy the complete egoist, we could only dilate on the absurdities of his notion. "You make my being dependent on yours, may I not, with equal reason, consider yours to be dependent on mine? Surely it must be unreasonable in a philosopher, after his mind has been developed by intercourse with the world, and with those before him; after his primary experience in this world of life and matter has imparted to him those necessary judgments and principles of thought, without which both thought and experience had been impossible,—it must be unreasonable and ungrateful to employ those very principles in denying the existence of the world and of the minds which have tutored you into intelligent being, except as subjective impressions of your own."

To include the existence of other men in the vision of idealism, is too violent an absurdity for any one in his sane senses. And this is a point to be taken account of, in the question of the ex-

istence of the world independently of the mind. The communication of thought between mind and mind discovers the world to be the same to all minds, and therefore, besides the facts of external appearance presented to each single mind, we have to account for the constant contemporaneousness and similarity of appearances to many minds.

Kant and Copernicus.

8. It would seem to have been a somewhat unfortunate comparison of Kant's, between his own position in the domain of pure reason and that of Copernicus in astronomy. He was speaking of his new theory of experience, that part of his system which was developed in the idealism of Fichte. He had seen that scepticism was the inevitable result of the doctrine which derived all knowledge from that experience, which consists in the passive reception of sensations, by the developed mind, from the world without. With a view to establish unquestionable and immutable first principles, which experience could never furnish, he paid attention to the intellectual nature of man, and saw that the mind is not in experience a mere passive recipient, but has native principles of its own, which combine with the received impressions, and give the *form* under which the *matter* of the outward world is presented to the mind.

But here arises a difficulty. On the sensation

theory, nothing was more simple than to conceive the picture of the world as inscribed by the senses on the blank sheet of the mind; now the mind and the world both contribute to the result : how then does the combination take place ? It is here that Kant exemplifies the common tendency of men to pass from one extreme to the opposite. Formerly in the production of knowledge the world had effected every thing, the mind nothing. He gives us instead a theory in which every thing is due to the mind, and nothing is left which can be assigned to the world.

How does the combination take place between the mind and the world in experience ? Kant's answer is briefly this: that whereas formerly the outward objects had been the cause of knowledge, we are now to consider the mind as possessing certain forms of its own, under which all knowledge must fall. Outward objects must be such as humbly to adapt themselves to these *à priori* forms of thought, or the mind will not condescend to notice them. Thus "the mind is the author of its own experience." "It has been hitherto assumed," he says, "that all cognition must accommodate itself to the external objects, but let it be tried whether in the problems of metaphysics we do not succeed better on the assumption, that the objects must accommodate themselves to our cognition. The case is similar to that of Copernicus, who finding

he did not succeed in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies, when he supposed them all to turn round the spectator, tried whether it would not answer better to suppose the spectator himself to turn, and the stars to be at rest[3]." The spectator of Copernicus is here intended to represent the perceiving mind, and the stars to be the various objects of perception. The mind then is supposed to impart from itself to the various objects that which is common to them all, as *e. g.* their space relations. To use his own illustration, —"not only are the drops of rain mere phænomena, but their round form itself, and even the space in which they fall, are nothing considered in themselves, but only modifications or fundamental forms of our sensible intuition[4]."

But in the case of Copernicus, the *one* diurnal motion of the earth accounted for *many* phænomena, namely the apparent diurnal motions of all the stars, which are perfectly similar to one another. In the present case the objects are indeed so far similar that they are all in space; but in their relations to space, in shape, they are wholly different from one another. The stars appear to revolve round the earth, but they all revolve in precisely the same time, and keep the

[3] Rein Vern. p. 670; Preface to 2nd Ed. Heywood, p. xxv.

[4] Ib. p. 52. Transl. p. 41.

same relative positions: objects appear in space, but they are all different in space.

But we may make the cases perfectly parallel, if instead of considering many objects and one mind, we consider one object and many minds. Here we know, from the communication of mind with mind, that the appearance of the one object is the same to all minds. It is therefore philosophical to choose, like Copernicus, the simple explanation of the phænomena, by seeking the cause of the appearances in the one object, and not in the many minds. If the minds made each of them its own object, we should want some cause of their agreement in time and figure; just as when the stars were supposed to move round the spectator, it was necessary to regard them as all fixed in one moving firmament.

Idealism requires theism.

9. In short the egoist must have recourse to theism. Fichte may take refuge with Berkeley [5], to escape palpable absurdity. Unless every object have its particular form, of square or round or the like, in itself, or at least the causes of its figure in itself, we must admit a cause superior to all the perceiving minds, which makes them represent to themselves similar pictures as of one and the same world.

It seems then that the phænomena of nature are

[5] Or with an equivalent theory.

not to be accounted for with equal ease and simplicity on every conceivable theory of existence.

Berkeley's idealism.

10. Berkeley's system is far less repugnant to the common reason. The passage to the outward world is effected by means of the causal law, but the substratum of the world is the Divine agency[6]. He professed to give a demonstration of his theory, an attempt in which he could not but fail. It is no less impossible to give an exact demonstration to the contrary[7].

It has been attempted to be argued, that the system has an advantage over others in point of simplicity. For if the Creator be a spiritual Being, and the spirit the immortal part of man; if the visible world be perishable, and all the purposes of life and religion depend only on the world of thought and appearance; what need, it is demanded, of an independent world of inert matter?

[6] See above, c. ii. 9.

[7] Even on the strictest theory of immediate perception the *non-ego* may be the Divine Being. Can an answer to this idealism be founded on our immediate knowledge of the space-relations of matter before we have refuted both Kant's and Sir Isaac Newton's doctrines of space? A difficult undertaking. To the superficial answers founded on a stone or a precipice Berkeley might have given a mathematical retort, that even if matter be considered non-existent (= 0), still, since the human body must in that case also be non-existent (= 0), the relation between the nonentities may still be a finite blow! But he debarred himself from this answer by his mathematical speculations. It is a curious fact that the denier of the differential mathematics should have asserted what is equivalent, in the common apprehension of it, to a differential theory of material existence.

The answer to this argument furnishes the best answer to the theory. It may be tolerated as a conceivable account of things; but when it begins to make exclusive pretensions, it invites us to inquire more particularly whether it be the simplest, or most probable, or even competent explanation.

And it is certain that there are facts of observation, which are more easily accounted for on the common doctrine of the existence of matter. The law of parsimony which is alleged in favour of idealism, may with greater justice be retorted against it. If all appearances are produced in the mind by the immediate action of the Omnipresent Creator, what account shall we give of the wonderful complexity of creation, the marvellous structure for instance of the human frame, the endless combinations and adaptations and chains of laws, which seem to bind together the universe, and these not all lying within the observation of man, but extending beyond it in all directions? The loadstone has been cited as an evidence against this theory [8], but is not a stronger objection than many other specific properties of material substances.

It may be replied perhaps that these complexities of the visible world display the immensity of the Creator, and serve at the same time to conceal

[8] Mentioned by Coleridge.

His Majesty from the immediate gaze; but there are other considerations to which this answer would be irrelevant. The most remarkable of these may be drawn from geology. This science unfolds the history of the globe for countless ages before the existence of man, discovering the remains of innumerable varieties of living creatures which inhabited the earth, before it was adapted to be his dwelling-place. If then the existence of the world is but the present act of the Creator upon the mind, what need can there be, what purpose can it serve, that this present act should be such as to contain in itself a record of all past acts, which can so slightly concern us? If we are to apply the law of parsimony to the Divine agency, how are we to account for the fact that His operation is not only that which is necessary for beings now existing, but a perpetual reproduction of the remains of even the most insignificant creatures which existed in ages past, nay even of their footsteps on the beach, and of the impressions of drops of rain? If man be the only being of the world who really exists, why should that phænomenal existence have been bestowed at all on the geological nautilus or belemnite? And why should the world itself appear to have advanced to its present condition through a series of previous states and revolutions continued through countless ages of time?

These remarks do not pretend to be a confutation of Berkeley's idealism, but they are a sufficient answer to the pretence of greater simplicity. It is evident that matter exists in such a way, as to receive in itself the records of its own history, and to carry on through distant ages the story of its former condition, its strange inhabitants, its many changes and catastrophes[9]. Beyond this we have no knowledge of its internal nature, nor is it of the least consequence that we should.

SECTION II.

MATERIALISM.

Popular materialism is shallow.

11. An atheistic theory which assigns all the reality of being to matter, regarding mind itself as material in its essence, has one great advantage over an atheistic idealism. The material world is prior in existence to every individual mind; its forces incomparably surpass all human power; it extends in its vastness beyond the faculties of movement, of sight, of imagination; and must be admitted by all to be instrumental in the mind's development, if not the source of its whole being.

[9] This fact has no significance on Des Cartes' curious hypothesis of creation:—"M. Descartes a pensé que Dieu avait formé le monde tout d'un coup; mais il a cru aussi que Dieu l'avait formé dans le même état, dans le même ordre, et dans le même arrangement de parties où il aurait été s'il l'avait formé peu à peu par les voies les plus simples." (Malebranche, Recherche, l. vi. p. ii. c. iv.) But this appears to be one of the struggles of reason against blind authority.

But materialism is open to the question, What is this *matter* which contains the source and the reality of all things? Is it what we see and feel, the extended, the inert, the coloured? But these are properties in relation to the cognition-faculties; and the question is, What is this matter prior to the mind which is born from it, what is it in itself? It is a short way of accounting for every thing, first to convert the sensations into objects, then attribute to these subject-objects an eternal existence, and declare them to be the reservoir of all potential being and the source of all actual phænomena. It is to include within the circle of human knowledge what runs out to the infinite in every direction, and then invest with the attribute of eternity what is known to be but a thing of yesterday. It is to compress the infinite within the finite, then stretch the finite to the eternal. This awkward attempt to make sensations into objects takes away in fact the existence of that very material world which is pretended to be the alone existent, and thus, like extreme idealism, is presently reduced to nihilism.

Thus dualism or nihilism are the only alternatives. Mind and matter are distinct entities. Deny either of them, and you are presently found to be denying the other. Nihilism is the corollary of extreme materialism and of extreme idealism.

Yet this kind of materialism, coarse and shallow

as it is, has found great favour with atheists of all ages. Its superficialness is its recommendation. Men are glad to find that philosophy can easily be kept within the limits of the popular understanding, and readily embrace theories which seem to be easily comprehensible. Thus the weakness of materialism is its strength. Its conceptions are obvious, its reasonings can be followed and its results mastered without any effort of thought, and easily fascinate minds eager for novelty, but averse to troublesome abstract investigation. Men are generally more inquisitive than thoughtful: the most patient and intelligent can ask far more questions than they can answer.

The system of nature.

12. It is to this delusive simplicity that "the system of nature," commonly ascribed to Mirabaud, and works of a similar character, owe their influence over many minds. The reader follows them without trouble, and thinks that to peruse and understand them is to solve the problem of existence and to comprehend all the mysteries of the universe. This is what they pretend to teach him. Matter evidently exists; it is extended and heavy, and so on; it possesses innumerable properties, and is connected in its parts by innumerable relations. It is the source of all our knowledge; it is discovered to us by all our senses; it is the only existing thing we can either see or

feel; it must therefore be the only thing which exists at all. Every thinker admits that all knowledge comes through the senses, and what can we discover by the senses but the material world? But the advocates of this "Dirt-philosophy[1]" must speak for themselves.

"We only assure ourselves," says one, "of that which we see; we yield to nothing but evidence; if we have a system, it is one founded upon facts; we perceive in ourselves, we behold every where else nothing but matter; we therefore conclude from it that matter can both feel and think." . . . "We scrupulously confine ourselves to what comes to our knowledge through the medium of the senses, the only instruments with which nature has furnished us to discover truth[2]."

The material world then includes every thing which exists; matter assumes various forms; it is inert and insensate in the world, it becomes living and sensitive in the mind. The mind, in fact, is nothing else than a material organism, the brain. Sensation is produced by physical actions on the brain through the nerves of sense, certain movements and vibrations ensue, and these movements, variously modified by circumstances, some of them probably up and down, and some to the right and

[1] "In the emphatic language of Fichte." Sir William Hamilton, Discussions, p. 39.

[2] System of Nature, ii. xiii.

left, some straight and some spiral, some circular and some elliptical, these are nothing else than the mind's feelings and thoughts. All this seems very simple and very plausible. Every one can understand the words and sentences, but every one does not see that, though it pretends to explain every thing, it really explains nothing. The whole mystery is left precisely where it was, for it has not been approached. The existence of matter discovered in perception is made a primary fact, while the prior fact of consciousness, the sensation or perception which discovers it, is virtually denied. "Every sensation is nothing more than the shock given to the organs; every perception is this shock propagated to the brain [3]."

Mind and matter incommensurable.

13. But the least attention may show that on such a question as the origin and nature of existence, the more simple a theory is, the less likely to be true; and the more it pretends to explain, the less are its pretensions to be relied on. Take the last step of the process of sensation. Feeling and thought are certain movements of the brain. The answer has been given by many a writer and by many a reader, but is too important to need apology for its repetition, that physical impressions, however necessary to sensation, are not sensation;

[3] "System, &c.," i. viii.

and though it could be proved that every mental operation is attended by movements of the brain, still motion is not thought; but that physical impressions and motions are something totally different from sensations and thoughts, and incommensurable with them. The nerves and the brain might move to all eternity, and change their movements every day and hour; but there could be no sensation or thought if there were not something present, which we call mind, though we know not what it is in itself, which has the peculiar power of sensibility to these movements, and possesses its own specific faculty of thought.

Mind, we have said, is an unknown something. The expression is indefinite, but we must speak in similar terms of matter also. We know nothing of either except their properties or effects; and those of mind, feeling, thought, will, are so totally different from those of matter, extension, hardness, divisibility, that we can never pass from either to the other, nor discover any connexion or relation between them.

Materialism explains nothing.

14. The materialist pretends to have solved the problem of existence before he has removed the mystery from the meanest thing. He has mastered a true theory of the universe! Let him explain the existence of a pebble. It is something

divisible; all matter is divisible; but can it be divided *in infinitum*, or does it consist of a finite number of infinitely hard indivisible atoms? It has a certain colour; but this depends on the sensibility of the mind and the properties of light. It has weight; but only through the attraction of the earth. It attracts, then, and is attracted, according to the universal law of matter; but this, after all, is only a force. At all events it has a certain size and shape—we cannot divest it of its extension. No; we cannot while it remains, but we can suppose every thing removed except extension, and then the whole matter is removed; so that even if we could refute the idealist when he affirms that space is but the necessary form of the intuition and is nothing out of the mind, even though extension be something real and absolute, yet extension does not imply extended substance. The properties of matter describe then only its appearances in sensation, not what it is in itself.

Systems of materialism. The hylopathian.

15. Various well-known systems of materialism have been current in the world. The grossest form is that which converts the sensible appearance into a reality, and immediately loses sight of the diversities of qualities which alone constitute that appearance, regarding them as inessential to the matter itself, and continually generated and corrupted. This is what is called the hylopathian

atheism, and appears to have been that of Anaximander [4].

The hylozoic.

The hylozoic system, to avoid the absurdity of deriving life from dead matter, ascribes a certain latent life and understanding to all matter, and derives all sensitive and rational souls from the life concealed in matter [5].

The homœomerian.

Anaxagoras, to avoid the creation of the different qualities of matter out of nothing, as in the hylopathian atheism, invented what is called his homœomery, which supposes that all the various qualities and properties of matter have belonged eternally to its atoms, which "were originally endued with all those forms and qualities that are vulgarly conceived to be in bodies, some bony, some fleshy, some fiery, some watery, some white, some black, some bitter, some sweet, and the like [6]." But Anaxagoras was not an atheist. His system was a dualism, that of an eternal mind fashioning the eternal matter. This is what we might expect from his theory of matter itself: for if qualities be ingenerable out of nothing, mind at all events must be ingenerable and eternal. But atheistic materialists have held the homœomery without the uncreated mind. Matter may have all the eternal qualities it may require, provided it want no mind

[4] Cudworth's Intell. Sys., Harrison's ed. vol. iii. p. 403.
[5] Ib. i. p. 106. [6] Ib. i. p. 65.

before their own. This, according to some accounts, was Anaximander's notion.

The Democritic.

The atomism of Democritus was probably founded on the preceding. It pretended to derive all nature, mental as well as material, from the fortuitous concourse of atoms, and is therefore essentially atheistic. Such appears to be the true account of his system. He divested the atoms of Anaxagoras of all their qualities except figure. They are still corporeal, still extended and divisible. They are also diverse from one another in figure. Plenum and vacuum are the first principles of all things: what is unextended is nothing. The different kinds of matter, and minds also, are supposed then to be generated by atoms of different figure combining in different ways, and to be corrupted by their segregation. The soul and fire are said to consist of spherical atoms [7].

The pseudo-stoical, or cosmoplastic.

Cudworth makes mention of another system of material atheism, which he supposes to be a

[7] This account of Democritus' opinions is founded on passages of Aristotle quoted by Cudworth (vol. i. p. 14). If accurate, Mr. Lewis is mistaken in concluding (Biog. Hist. vol. i. p. 152) that because Democritus repudiated the qualities of Anaxagoras, he therefore divested his atoms of all sensible properties, and reduced them to forces, thus anticipating the monadology of Leibnitz, and enunciating a dynamical theory of existence. The monads of Leibnitz are intelligible forces, without figure, unextended, indivisible. (Monadol. §§ 1—3.) They are in no sense material, as he repeatedly insists. He says of the old philosophers, "Ces anciens étoient plus solides qu'on ne croit," but that they anticipated his own profound speculations must require proof. Leibnitz was a Christian philosopher; the reader of Mr. Lewis's History will hardly learn that he was a theist.

degenerate offshoot from the system of the Stoics. The characteristic tenet of the Stoical school is known to have been its "soul of the world," a certain animal soul and conscious intelligent mind, supposed to preside over the whole world, and to lodge immediately in the fiery matter of it. This was to make the world a huge sentient and rational animal. It gives, however, a pantheistic rather than an atheistic theory, and is called by Cudworth "a kind of spurious theism, or theism disguised in a paganic dress [8]."

But some speculators, it appears—more alive to the absurdity of making the world itself a living intelligent being, than to the demand of reason for a Great Being superior to it,—degraded it from the rank of an animal to that of a huge plant, "a body endued with one plastic or spermatic nature, branching out the whole orderly and methodically, but without any understanding or sense." Cudworth is of opinion that Seneca and the younger Pliny were disposed to this pseudo-stoical atheism. It differs from the system of Anaximander in its ascribing a certain unity of organization, or one common plastic life, like that of a plant, to the whole world.

These theories still current.

16. It were a useless task to seek either to scare the theist with the monsters of defunct atheism,

[8] Vol. i. p. 194.

or to hold the modern atheist responsible for exploded theories, much less for such a theory as the preceding, which seems hardly ever to have found acceptance. But, unfortunately, we have not to raise spectres from the grave. These old systems are still alive, and are as forward as ever in the service of dogmatic atheism.

That of "the system of nature" differs very little from the atheistic or material homœomery, ascribed by some writers to Anaximander, which makes matter with all its qualities to be eternal. "It is an unintelligible jargon," says the author, "to call matter an unique being, it is a *genus* of beings." Mind, however, has no such prerogative as the common qualities of matter. It possesses no such permanent existence, but is something generable and corruptible, and therefore quite inferior in being to the sensible qualities which have no existence without it!

But the writer has no objection to the hylozoic theory. He finds the want of something of the kind when he comes to the sensibility of the mind, although he had previously been quite content with matter and qualities and motion. He considers that it is the brain which makes the difference between man and the beasts. But he here stumbles upon an unfortunate fact. "The sensibility of the brain is a fact." Yes, and how is it to be got rid of? "If it be asked, whence comes

this property, we shall reply, it is the result of an arrangement, of a combination peculiar to the animal; insomuch that coarse insensible matter ceases to be so by animalizing itself, that is to say, by combining and identifying itself with the animal [9]."

Materialism is wont to offer us husks for food, and to deceive the ignorant with words in the deplorable dearth of ideas. But the attempt is seldom so undisguised as it is here. Our author is naturally afraid that this "animalizing itself," however it may impose upon sottish minds, will hardly satisfy the half wise. So for their sake he is obliged to have recourse to the hylozoic fancy. "Some philosophers think that sensibility is a universal quality of matter. If this hypothesis be admitted, then, to animalize a substance is only to destroy the obstacles that prevent its being active or sensible [1]."

"Some philosophers think." There is an odd resemblance between the ancient and modern atheisms. Both of them are afraid that a little thought will convince mankind that something more is wanted than matter and motion; both are driven to the hylozoic notion, that all matter has life, only it is not brought out in all; but no one can be found among ancient or modern atheists who

[9] Pt. i. c. viii. [1] Ibid.

will be responsible for the figment. Of the hylozoism of ancient philosophy it has been said, that "this kind of atheism seems to be but an unshapen embryo of some dark and cloudy brains, that was never yet digested into an entire system, nor could be brought into any such tolerable form, as to have the confidence to show itself abroad in full and open view[2]." And in modern atheism we have still the same unshapen embryo introduced to us with "some philosophers think," and left to be entertained by such "dark and cloudy brains" as may be able to take it in. If the author had read what he somewhere calls the metaphysical romances of Cudworth, he might have found in them enough of sound and sober sense to save him from this metaphysical escapade.

Theory of development.

17. But the most popular materialism of the present day is that which has been connected with the theory of development[3]. It is not intended to represent this theory, at least in its application to the material world, as incompatible either with theism or with Christianity. On the contrary, it may be expected, if it should be fully established, to afford a most striking manifestation of the

[2] Cudworth, i. 107.

[3] Some valuable hints from Professor Powell have led me to aim at expressing, with more distinctness and consistency, what was intended in this branch of the subject.

eternal order and consistency of the Divine conduct, and the unity of the Divine plan in creation. The stability of material laws and forces, which, after myriads of years, continue to evolve their innumerable results in a harmonious universe, will offer a more splendid view of the agency of infinite intelligence than can be gained in the observation of particular instances of design. Such a material philosophy will put an end at all events to the reign of *chance*, one of the deities of atheists; as perhaps a sounder mental philosophy may confine *fatalism* to material causes, and so limit the authority of their other deity.

But a development theory is easily delivered into the service of scepticism by the rashness of an eager generalization. Sound principles of mental and moral philosophy are not less essential than comprehensiveness and accuracy of physical observation and induction. Some of these principles may possibly be suggested by considering a work which has excited great attention,—"The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation."

"The Vestiges of Creation."

18. This work makes a constant and reverent profession of theism, and there can be no question of the author's sincerity. A theory of progressive creation and development, though often made the basis of atheism, is quite compatible with true theism, provided the forces of nature be regarded

as subordinate to the First Cause of all, and the law of development as the law of the Divine agency. But the mechanical fatalism of the work is certainly atheistic.

The theory of the "Vestiges" considers the world as it is, with all its varieties of living and rational beings, and even the whole universe of the solar system, to have commenced from some simple condition of mere material existence, and to have advanced progressively, in accordance with natural and material laws, to its present order and intelligence. The laws of progress are confessed to be ordained and directed by the Creative Intelligence and Beneficence; but, notwithstanding this, they are represented as the unswerving laws of mechanical causes, and as binding the universe both of matter and of mind in the chains of causal necessity.

The greater part of the work is devoted to the theory of development. Let us commence from man the highest work of creation, and descend from this to the most simple. We find that "the ordinary mental manifestations are looked upon as simple phænomena resulting from organization, those of the lower animals being absolutely the same in character, though developed within narrower limits[4]." Reason is developed in man in

[4] 8th ed. p. 252.

all possible degrees, from the intelligence of Newton down to the lowest conditions of savage life. "A Cuvier and a Newton are but expansions of a clown." In like manner the instincts of animals descend by slow gradations from the sagacity of the dog, or the skill and industry of the bee, to the torpid condition which can hardly be distinguished from mere vegetable life. In fact it is impossible to draw the line between the two kingdoms; some forms belong as easily to the one as to the other.

We may thus descend a grand staircase of nature, and may go yet lower in the scale of being. The various classes of the vegetable world rise to higher or lower conditions of organization, and the lowest cannot be distinguished from unorganized matter. The intellectual world appears to have been derived from the animal, this from the vegetable, and this again from the mineral world, through the agencies and progressions of natural causes. We thus come down from rational beings to dead matter. In the material world itself we are easily carried back to an epoch, when the earth was a confused chaos of hot rocks and mud of water and dense fog; and beyond this, till it is but a huge red-hot meteoric stone, at so high a temperature that all the waters of the ocean were suspended in an atmosphere of mist, or rising from the ground and falling back to it in an incessant

deluge of mist and rain. A step farther, and the huge mass was a globe of molten granite, revolving as now upon its axis, and acquiring by its revolution the spheroidal form which it still retains. Take a few more ages of the past eternity, and the liquid mass must have been vapour. It is more than probable that the vapour was diffused over a large space, and that the great void was once filled with an uniform fire-mist. In distant regions of space, such fire-mists are said to exist even now. Many of the stellar nebulæ are unconsolidated fogs of fire.

We arrive then at a time when "the whole of our firmament was a diffused mass of nebulous matter." We must not expect in this haze of nature to see very clearly how things go on; but "if from any peculiarity in the constitution nuclei are formed, the neighbouring matter will be aggregated to these nuclei, and masses more or less solid will be detached from the rest." And as the matter is collected to a centre, a rotatory motion will be established, just as we see "on so humble a scale as the water sinking through a funnel[5]."

The geology and natural philosophy of this able and popular work have been sufficiently examined, and scarcely fall within the purpose of

[5] These passages are from an early edition, and appear to have been altered or expunged. But we have to deal with principles, not any particular book.

our subject. There can be no doubt of the gradual development of the material world. It has not arisen into being in its present condition, but through a progressive creation by law. But even as regards the world of matter, it has been made evident that much is to be learnt to put us in possession of a scientific system of cosmogony; far more before it will be possible to say, whether in any degree, and how far, the system of development can be applied to living beings.

Philosophy of the theory.

19. We are more concerned with the philosophy of development, on which a few points demand attention.

Having arrived by gradual descent at a primæval fire-mist, an important question remains respecting the extension of our journey. Whence came this fog of fire, and what are its powers and properties? Suppose it to be true that universal nature has passed through a development of countless millenniums, are we through all of them to hold to our first principle, "Nothing out of nothing," "Every thing which happens must have its cause"? If so, then each preceding state must have contained the germs or causes of all the succeeding, or must have advanced to them under the agency of a Superior Cause. May we assume this then to be the truth? The religious bearing of the system depends mainly upon this question. With-

out an answer the development is reduced, at the best, and if all its assumptions be true, to a mere continuous succession. It is nothing but an amusement of phantasmagoria, a set of dissolving views which follow one another, but whether with any connexion or dependence, is left to the spectator's conjectures and his perplexity.

It were to be wished that the author had given us some information upon the nature of this fire-mist; whether it were hylozoic, or homœomerian, or atomic; whether it were uniform in its properties; whether the germs of all the diverse qualities of things were diffused throughout it, or attached to particular particles, or altogether wanting. A sweep of thought so universal as the "Vestiges," ought not to leave us after all as ignorant of existence as before. It will surely condescend to notice the question, whether it were really "unintelligible jargon," as we have been told, "to call matter an unique being," and whether it consisted even in the fire-mist of "a genus of beings." We cannot help falling on the question, 'Where is the electricity now, which is to work such wonders after myriads of centuries, by secreting thought and feeling in the nervous organism of man?'

It may be pleaded that this inquiry was foreign to the author's purpose. He sought to trace the course and law of development, not to account

for all its causes. But some of his readers who have descended with him thus far, may have felt disposed to prolong the journey to the end. Many who have arrived at the fire-mist may have thought themselves already at the end, regarding a haze as little better than nonentity, and may have expressed their feeling in some such conclusion, as, "It can have required a very slight effort of creative power to produce this." And, in fact, there is a current system of atheism which maintains the leading doctrines of the "Vestiges," but discovers in them no indication of a Creator.

Atheistic material development.

20. A few observations are therefore requisite on the *atheistic* system of material development. If it be maintained that the steps we have taken down the descending scale of nature were not mere changes of form, but deprivations of essential qualities and properties; unless all the powers of the world as it is were originally latent in the fire-mist; we may as easily go on from this to nonentity, as we have effected the former descent from a more complex condition of being to a more simple. Matter is known by its properties, and thus only; and the primæval fog may as easily have received its few properties from nothing, as aggregate from nothing new powers which had not belonged to it.

The author of the "Vestiges" would repudiate

this construction of his system; although he goes so far as to regard not only the different states of the visible world, but even the mind of man as a product of material development. He speaks of mental action as electrical[6]; and it is possible certainly that a movement of electricity or other nervous fluid may be essential, in the present existence of man, to every action of the mind. Yet *thought will still be something beyond electricity.* If this plain truth be forgotten, if it be not stated, and stated prominently, the development theory is at once surrendered to the sceptic. He will press the question, and with reason;—'What then can we know of the Divine mind? Must not this also be a development from materialism? If intelligence, affections, will, in man be nothing more than electric or similar movements, must it not follow that the marks of intelligent design in the world can prove no more than the existence of a world-spirit, in the electric or similar agent of the mundane sphere; and must they not fail to lead us to a Being who transcends nature?'

Revival of the Stoical system.

We shall thus be brought back to the spurious theism of the Stoical system, with its "Soul of the world" residing in the fiery matter of it. It is fair to admit that this doctrine is disclaimed[7] by the author of the "Vestiges," but others may hold it

[6] Ed. 8, p. 255, and note 100.

[7] Ed. 8, p. 10.

in connexion with his system, and may think perhaps that they are more consistent. A similar opinion has recently been revived in other quarters. It may be met with in works on mesmerism and kindred subjects, and is the natural refuge of defeated materialists. It is sure to bring with it its old attendant, the cosmo-plastic atheism, which makes the world to resemble a plant rather than a living animal. They who have persuaded themselves that the functions of the mind are nothing but electrical motions, may still be slow to believe that similar functions are performed by the electricity of the massive inert globe! It is not easy to be persuaded that this huge earth possesses a soul and feels and reflects like a man. Electricity may excite muscular movement, and the operation of digestion in the human body, but it performs no such offices in the globe; and moreover the world is destitute of that wondrous organism, which divides with electricity the mental domain of man, —the system of the brain and nerves.

And of the cosmo-plastic atheism.

This form of atheism which holds the world to be not an animal, but like a great plant, having what Cudworth calls "one spermatic or plastic nature which orders the whole without conscious reason or understanding," "is hinted to us," he says, "in that doubtful passage of Seneca's,—'Whether the world be endued with one sentient rational life, or whether it be only a body governed

by nature like trees and other plants.'" But Seneca is careful to remind us that "whatsoever, from the beginning to the end of it, it can either do or suffer, was all at first included in the nature of the whole[8]." It is only on this condition that Seneca will affirm with the author of the "Vestiges," that "the original and first rudiments of the world contained in them not only the sun and moon, the courses of the stars, and the generation of animals, but also the vicissitudes of all terrestrial things."

Self-creation.

21. If this plain truth be forgotten, if it be imagined that the universe may have been developed by natural law, yet not have contained in its primæval state the causes of all its developments; if new qualities and properties are superadded at each stage, which were neither resident in the original matter, nor are introduced by supernatural agency; and if, as will then be the case, a slight effort of creative power had been sufficient to give existence to the fire-mist, we then fall on something more like the old system of Anaximander than the preceding. We are in this case asked to believe that the vast universe before our eyes, with all its beauties and sublimities, has grown by its

[8] "Sive anima est mundus, sive corpus natura gubernante ut arbores et sata."

"Ab initio ejus usque ad exitum, quicquid facere, quicquid pati debeat inclusum est." (Nat. Quæst. iii. 29. Cudworth, i. pp. 193, 194.)

own powers from an original condition of simple matter, which may as easily be supposed to have accomplished the wonderful feat of self-creation out of nothing—to have achieved the first little step into being—the first inconceivably small advance from nothing to something, in the slow and painful labour of an elapsed eternity. On such a hypothesis the "vestiges of creation" become footsteps backward into nonentity. Such is the course of thought: of being itself one would wish, though fearfully, that the labour of an eternity may not be lost, the progress not become regressive; that the footsteps thus far happily in the right direction may continue,—

"Omnia *me* adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum."

The vestiges of Anaximander.

These vestiges of self-creation lead us to something very like the system of Anaximander. We have been brought back to his mysterious first principle, the infinite (τὸ ἄπειρον), which has been such a puzzle to philosophers. Some have understood this to be an Infinite Being; others, that it is unbounded matter (a diffused fire-mist); others, that it is something still more primitive,—infinite and empty space; and others again, that it is a word founded on the common confusion between subjective and objective, a mere abstract term, which he fancied to mean something, but which really means nothing.

It is worth notice, for its curiosity, that his cosmogony is very like the "Vestiges" in its details. He "affirmed the heavens and the infinite worlds to have arisen by segregation from the infinite; and that at the generation of the world a certain sphere of fire encompassed the air which surrounds the earth, as a bark doth a tree; and that when this sphere was broken up, and divided into spherical bodies, there sprung from it, the sun, moon, and stars[9]." This is precisely the cosmogony of the "Vestiges," due allowance being made for the change of astronomical science. We have the diffused simple matter, the segregation to "nuclei," the fiery matter surrounding the central body, and breaking up into attendant spheres.

But this is not all. It is the beginning of the present phase of things, the passage from the infinite unknown to the universe. We learn from Plutarch that the same philosopher imagined "the first animals to have been generated in moisture, and encompassed with thorny backs." So that the development of plants into animals is no novelty after all! But still more remarkable, we have also the development of animals into men,—"Man

[9] Τὸ ἄπειρον . . . ἐξ οὗ δή φησι τούς τε οὐρανοὺς ἀποκεκρίσθαι, καὶ καθόλου τοὺς ἅπαντας ἀπείρους ὄντας κόσμους· φησὶ δὲ κατὰ τὴν γένεσιν τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου . . . τινα φλογὸς σφαῖραν περιφυῆναι τῷ περὶ τὴν γῆν ἀέρι, ὡς τῷ δένδρῳ φλοιόν· ἧς τινος ἀπορῥαγείσης, καὶ εἴς τινας ἀποκλεισθείσης κύκλους, ὑποστῆναι τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ τὴν σελήνην, καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας. (Euseb. Evang. Præp. lib. i. quoted by Cudworth, i. p. 187.)

was generated at first from animals of other kinds;" and to complete the parallel, "Anaximander concludes that men were at first generated in fishes [1]."

But self-creation is too preposterous to gain credence, and we shall find conclusive evidence against the eternity of matter. Suffice it here to observe, that unless the successive progressions have been effected through a supernatural agency similar to that which must be acknowledged in its commencement, the primæval matter must have contained the germs or causes of all future developments in itself. We must either acknowledge a Creator, or regard matter with all its powers as eternal. It is nonsense to imagine that the creation of the fire-mist could be easier or more simple than that of the world as it is. We cannot say that less power will create the acorn than the oak. Indeed there is nothing more marvellous and mysterious in nature, than the various and hidden properties of the innumerable seeds of plants, in virtue of which, though to the eye they be scarcely discernible from grains of sand, they are developed under the requisite conditions, and shoot forth each of them to the production of its own kind. We need not regard the taunt of atheism, that the

[1] *Ἀναξίμανδρος ἐν ὑγρῷ γεννηθῆναι τὰ πρῶτα ζῶα, φλοιοῖς περιεχόμενα ἀκανθώδεσι.* (Pl. Plac. Phil. lib. i. cap. xix. Cudworth, ib.)

Ἐξ ἀλλοειδῶν ζώων ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐγεννήθη. (Euseb. Ev. Præp. lib. i.)

Ἀναξίμανδρος ἐν ἰχθύσιν ἐγγενέσθαι τὸ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπους ἀποφαίνεται. (Pl. Symp. lib. viii. Q. 8.)

power of God is the refuge of ignorance. Man's unknown will always infinitely exceed his known, but he may know that the complement of his knowledge is in a Being superior to himself.

Limitations of the theory.

22. A development theory must therefore assume, that in the ascending scale of being the causes of all change and progress were either communicated by the Creator to the original matter, or have been continually superadded by Divine Power, whether through occasional interventions or by continuous agency may be, in the main, but a secondary question [2]. If the scale were complete from the lowest to the highest forms of being, if it were ascertained that the lower orders are uniformly senior to the higher, yet it would not follow that these are mere material or natural developments of the former. That many of the actions and instincts of animals resemble actions and faculties of man, affords no foundation for the inference that man possesses no peculiar faculties of his own, that "the difference between mind in the lower animals and in man is a difference in degree only [3]." The mind cannot avoid the conclusion, that a creative energy beyond that which gave being to matter, is requisite for introducing life and intelligence to

[2] It may be known or conjectured that these different *notions* of the Divine agency have no ultimate difference of objective signification, and are all equally true.

[3] Vestiges, p. 256.

the world. If it were even known that there had been a constant and regular progression of material and living beings, we could not conclude that there had been a development of mind *from* matter, but only *in* matter. We have, in fact, precisely the same difficulty in accounting for the origin of mind in matter, as for the origin of matter in empty space. We have no more warrant for seeking the first causes of intelligence in body, than for seeking the causes of body in nonentity. Thus a refutation of these systems of atheism rests in the all-important, original, undeniable truth, that there is an impassable gulf between the facts of mental consciousness and any conceivable movements, however subtile, of matter or electricity.

We may allow that there has been progress in the material world, we may have confidence in the mental progress of mankind, yet still consider it premature, to say the very least, to combine the two progressions in one course of nature, when the only ground for the passage from the inorganic to the organic worlds—to say nothing of the more difficult passage to intelligence—is the doubly vague conjecture, founded on an announcement made "some years ago by Prevost and Dumas, *that globules could be produced in albumen by electricity.*" "If, therefore," our author reasons, by a logic which *may* certainly be electrical, so fitful and sudden are its movements, "If these globules

be identical with the cells which are now held to be reproductive, it might be said that the production of albumen by artificial means is the only step in the process wanting. This has not yet been effected; but it is known to be only a chymical process, the mode of which may be any day discovered in the laboratory."

Two steps, then, are to be taken in passing from the unorganized to the organized; the production of albumen, which has not (yet) been effected, and the production therein of reproductive globules which has also not been effected [4]. As to the globules of Dumas, we may as well believe in reproductive soap-bubbles.

In these observations it has been attempted to show, that a theory of development cannot be serviceable to scepticism, unless it be founded on false principles of philosophy, and at variance with necessary truths. If some parts of the "Vestiges" have this tendency, such a work can lay claim to

[4] The experiments of Messrs. Cross and Weekes profess to give us a fact, but it is equally uncertain. The arguments *pro* and *con* appear equally inconclusive. Even if it could be shown that matter and electricity are sufficient for automatous animals, yet we are as far as ever from the human soul with all its faculties. But let the curious by all means continue their experiments. Truth will never suffer from investigation. Religion is but ill-founded, when it is jealous of science. As yet the question seems to be very much where it was when Malebranche wrote (Entret. xi. 8). "Ne nous arrêtons pas, je vous prie, aux preuves qu'on donne qu'il y a des animaux qui viennent de pourriture; car elles sont si faibles, ces preuves, qu'elles ne méritent point de réponse."

great indulgence. Religious reformers have been liable to extravagance, and it is not to be expected that the pioneers of scientific progress will all at once hit upon the exact line of truth. Even the material fatalism of the work is not a necessary consequence of creation by law. If it be possible that man may have received from one creative act an originating power of his own, it is possible, as far as we can know, that such a power may have arisen through a causal progression from a simpler state of being. But the ground on which the author rests his opinion upon this momentous question is scarcely such as to demand further notice.

Retort of idealism.

23. To conclude this subject: even though the theory were proved true from first to last, though the scale of beings, from the fire-mist to the world of thought and affection, were shown to be continuous and unbroken, yet the retort of the idealist is still applicable and unanswerable. He has as much right to say that matter is an action or evolution of mind, as that mind is an action or evolution of matter. The material world, it is true, is prior in time to the finite mind of a man; but, as Berkeley represents, it may be a continued Divine energy upon the succession of created minds. Common sense answers both idealism and materialism with equal force, when it affirms that

since the two entities, mind and matter, are in all human knowledge totally distinct and incommensurable, there is as good reason to attribute independent existence to the one as to the other. No progress of science, no knowledge of facts and laws and developments, has advanced us a step towards the solution of this mystery. It can, therefore, be only superficial to account for the origin of mind by any analogy drawn from the material world. It were simpler, and perhaps wiser, to argue, that since the two worlds are totally separate so far as known, the separation extends farther to the unknown. We shall find abundant reason to conclude that whatever be the age of the world, whatever may have been its past history, it cannot *as matter* be self-existent, but must be subordinate to a Being superior to all the relations and conditions, under which alone it can be known to us.

MONADOLOGY. Atheism not always corporeal.

24. The learned Dr. Cudworth, in his examination of the ancient systems of atheism, which we find still extant in the world, points out their inconsistencies with one another, and finds atheism to be "a certain strange kind of monster with four heads, that are all of them perpetually biting, tearing, and devouring one another." He is speaking of the Anaximandrian, the Democritic, the Stoical or cosmo-plastic, and the Stratonical or

hylozoic systems. These are all systems of coarse materialism, mere variations of the dirt-philosophy. "All atheists," he adds, "are mere corporealists, who in that dull and earthly disbelief or confounded sottishness of mind, which makes them deny a God, must needs be inclined to deny all incorporeal substance also."

But this remark is no longer strictly true. Modern speculation has founded sceptical systems on idealism as well as on corporealism. In denying the existence of the Infinite First Cause, atheism brings itself under the necessity of deifying the finite and subordinate. Nothing so common as to deify the human faculties. Atheistic materialism exalts the sensations to the throne of Deity; idealism, when pressed into atheism, is the deification of the reason.

Immaterial substance.

25. Idealism narrows the great inquiry of theism, by divesting it of all question upon the impossibility of conceiving an immaterial substance. This was the difficulty of Hobbes, who affirmed all existence to be corporeal, and pretended to believe in a corporeal God, the first mover of eternally existing matter. He maintained that the ancients possessed no such notion as that conveyed by our word "spirit," and even derives the notion from the abstract terms of the schoolmen [5]. He was infected

[5] Dr. Hampden ought to have seen to this.

with what Cudworth calls "the pneumatophobia, a certain kind of madness peculiar to the atheists, that makes them have an irrational but desperate abhorrence from spirits or incorporeal substances." He did not see that he had no right to regard that material world, in which he placed all the reality of life, as having any more substantial existence than the enchanted castle, or the palace of Aladdin. He overlooked the fact that it is known only as a world of appearance, a world which the close approach of idealism discovers to rest upon causes not conceivable under any material form, and which may at any time, through the decay of these causes, in a moment vanish into air. The world abideth, but by unseen influences. The very ghost which the materialist dreads is not only a reality, but is in occupation of his castle, and keeps the secret spell of its continuance. Its height, its thickness, its strength, the inertia and all the properties of the materials, are only so many impressions upon his mind; beyond these it is only in deep occult causes, which are no longer corporeal, that the existence of the world can be affirmed.

Monadology.

26. There are perhaps few sceptical materialists who hold a deeper and more subtile theory of matter than those we have considered; but traces of such a speculation are to be met with. If the

atoms of Democritus (§ 15) be divested of the property of figure, but supposed to retain the attribute of force, the doctrine approximates to the "monadology" of Leibnitz. But this great Christian philosopher, it need hardly be said, was far removed from an atomic atheism, or any other form of scepticism or materialism. His system is no longer a material atomism, but a purely intellectual theory of the universe. His monads are not inert, nor extended, nor passive material atoms, but primitive forces, which are the first principles of things. The Supreme Being is the Creator of all these primitive forces, and the First Cause of all things[6].

If we consider what must be implied in the assertion that nothing exists but matter, we shall find that it goes deeper than appears at first sight. To have meaning at all, it must signify that those unknown and subtile causes which give rise to the appearances of the material, give rise also to those of the mental world. This is as much as to say that the *substratum* of matter, if the word may be employed, is identical with that of mind; or, in other words, that two existing things, which in all their manifestations are totally distinct from one another, are yet identical in their unknown reality.

[6] "Toutes les monades ont reçu leur origine de Dieu et en dépendent." Nouv. Ess. iv. x. Art. 19.

"Dieu est le premier raison des choses." Theod. Discours, &c. § 7, Monadol. § 38, &c.

But two things which are wholly unknown in themselves cannot be known to exist in the same way, or with any community of properties or attributes. In all cognition they are evidently and totally distinct, what warrant can be found, except that of superficial confidence and bold assertion, for declaring them identical beyond the reach of cognition? If any one think to account for existence by a system of monads, he will find that more than one kind of force is necessary for the material world, much more for the totally diverse mental world. He will be involved in most of the difficulties of grosser materialists, if he do not recognise the necessity of theism as the basis of his scheme of speculation.

If no more be intended by the assertor of materialism, than that, for any thing we know, some of the forces which result in the existence of matter are the same as those of mind, we can only reply that it may be so. It may possibly be an objective truth, corresponding to the common belief of many Christians, that both spirits and matter are in some way dependent for their preservation on the abiding providence of God.

Creation of matter.

27. These observations bear upon the common difficulty of conceiving it possible that inert gross matter can have been created by a Spiritual Being. This question is not always thought to be an-

swered, as one might expect, by observing in every action of man that heavy matter is moved by something too subtile to be discovered by the senses. Some may imagine that they elucidate the doctrine of creation by the theory of development from a simple condition of mist and electricity, which are objects apparently less remote than grosser matter from our ordinary conception of spirit. But the difficulty is superficial. It is only *to us* that matter is massive, and heavy, and inert. In itself, and without reference to the senses, it may be conceived to be as spiritual as even spirit. We do not want the long journey of geological ages to pass from the material to the immaterial; there is still a wide chasm between them when we have gone back so far; and it may be approached as closely by a few steps into the present reality of things.

Dynamical theory of perception.

28. In questions of this kind it is necessary to distinguish between what is called a *dynamical theory* of material existence, and a dynamical theory of perception. That of existence can be no more than a hypothesis, the other is an unquestionable truth. The action of the outward world upon the nervous system gives rise to sensation, and is dynamical. The primitive perception of the mind is that of the resulting action and reaction. The motions of light, whether emanations

or undulations, strike the optic nerve, the waves of air communicate their movements to the nervous labyrinth of the ear, and the corresponding sensations are occasioned. Touch results from movements produced by slight pressure. Similar actions, or others like the minute movements of chymical forces, excite the sensations of taste and smell. All the sensations consist in the effects of these nervous movements upon the sensibility. But it does not follow that the *existence* of the objects of perception consists in these actions or their forces, any more than in their results upon the mind. The coarser materialism represents the sensations themselves as the external objects, and builds its system on the first gross conceptions. A little reflection is enough to dispel this delusion. It were equally unwarrantable to identify the existence of objects with the dynamical actions which give rise to the sensations.

Dynamical theory of existence.

29. We may conceive that underneath the causes which give us the perceptions of matter, there is another action and reaction of forces imperceptible to the common observation, arising, for instance, from some of the subtile fluids which pervade the universe, and resulting in the potencies which present the world of phænomena to the senses. This might be called a dynamical theory of existence. It is a conceivable theory, and one

which science might discover to be true. The existence of inert matter may be imagined to consist in the mutual action of such fluids in statical equilibrium, and the force of gravitation to be an unemployed resultant of their forces. The stable equilibrium of the action during the enormous period of material being, would be something still more wonderful than the stability of the astronomical movements, but more wonderful rather in degree than in kind.

If such a theory were established, the further question would still remain, what are these fluids in themselves? Are they independently existent, or in perpetual dependence on a Superior Being? Is there an absolute beginning within themselves, or do they, some or all of them, flow forth continually from the great fountain of all subordinate being? Science may advance much farther than it has yet done, and may approach nearer to the essential nature of corporeal substance; but questions of this kind will ever lie beyond its sphere.

CHAPTER V.

ATHEISM.

SECTION I.

DOGMATIC OR POSITIVE ATHEISM.

ATHEISM can find no solid foundations in materialism. The various materialist theories are unable to support themselves. It is necessary to make some observations on its inherent weakness and insufficiency.

Assumes fate or chance.

1. Positive atheism pretends to change the negation which Holy Scripture assigns to the heart into a dogmatic denial, and to establish it on principles of reason; asserting that the facts of experience can be combined and accounted for, without reference to a First Cause of all.

But in the place of one First Cause, it is obliged to have recourse to many; and having no author of their arrangement, no ordainer of their mutual

adaptations, it is obliged to assign them to *chance*, or to a course of nature, which is a blind *fate*.

These however are mere subjective notions, and have no real meaning. Every effect, every phænomenon and combination of separate phænomena, must have its cause, and that not only in its parts, but as a whole. Fate or chance are mere words, and give no account of the combinations. They are inadequate, in any sense they can bear, to be causes of the order of the universe. They are so repugnant to common reason and so manifestly insufficient, that the untutored mind instinctively rejects them, and the most competent thinkers will dismiss them from consideration with a brief remark. They can impose upon none but the half-wise.

The manifold defects and inconsistencies of atheism will be more fully exposed by the direct arguments of theism. A few remarks on this particular difficulty may first be offered.

One First Cause or many.

2. The question of theism or atheism, is that of one First Cause or many: one First Cause of all being, combining, harmonizing, and governing all subordinate things; or many first causes independent of one another, and without cause of their combination and harmony: One Great Cause, transcending indeed all human cognition and conception; or many partial causes, commending themselves to our notice and apprehension because they

resemble those subordinate causes which we see around us, but yet as to their secret nature equally incomprehensible with the One Cause: One, Who can contain in His immensity the adequate causes of all things; or many, finite and limited, which are only more ordinary and obvious to be demonstrably insufficient.

Every material theory is insufficient which does not rest upon a First Cause of all reality. However subtile may be its agents in the field of nature, however refined and ideal its conceptions, it can never escape from the causal law, nor avoid the admission of a diversity in the acting causes, corresponding to the diversity of effects or appearance. On a dynamical theory of existence, if the acting forces be regarded as self-existent, there must be some diversity in these forces, and they must be numerous. We can have no reason to assign why there may not be infinite possibilities of being. In actual being, every distinct particle of matter in the infinity of space must exist in virtue of its own peculiar forces; and every difference of the innumerable particles which compose the universe, must be referred to a difference in the eternal forces themselves, or in the mutual actions of different forces upon one another.

This is a conceivable theory of a created universe. But to imagine it to exist without a First Cause and paramount Lord of all, is to take up

with a theory which however refined it may be as a speculation, is only conceivable as loaded with difficulty, in its inability to account for the combinations and arrangements of things; and will be farther shown to be inconsistent with reason, in demanding for its support infinite chains of already past causes.

We may suppose an atheistic system to take the form of a monadology or a refined atomism, and to reduce all being to a system of simple irresolvable forces. Let us notice some of the difficulties of such a system. The same observations will apply to a theory of common materialism, with its "genus of beings."

Many primitive substances.

3. To account then for the existence of the universe as bare material substance, without regard to its form or order;—to account for even a vast chaos of matter, unordered and uncombined, we require a large number, and we can assign no reason why, in a universe unlimited in space and time, there might not be an infinite number of these primitive forces all eternal and self-existent.

But forces, or atoms, or whatever be the primitive elements of matter, these, in any number, will not give us the bare corporeal substance of the universe, much less the universe as it is. They will not even construct a chaos, without some relations to one another which they must possess eternally. A single monad or force cannot constitute

a perceptible particle of matter. To give even the smallest particle, even the least grain of sand, there must be a mutual relation and combined action of the forces.

The difficulties of atheism are vastly increased, when we take account of the immense extent, the endless variety, the marvellous order and beauty of the universe. What a wondrous combination of forces does it present to us! Consider the material world alone: its heavy matter, and its potent agencies of hidden fluids which have been unknown for ages; its sluggish waters, and its limpid light; the globe of the earth with all its varieties of matter, and the fixed relations of its different substances; the vault of the firmament with its million suns:—all bound together in one harmonious whole, and obedient, through endless ages, to laws which are never broken. What an immense number of forces and combinations of forces must act together to give existence to all the various substances of the universe, the genus of beings in heaven and earth: how many conditions to combine them in one whole: how many more to make it an orderly and abiding whole: how many more to direct and control the distinct agencies of nature through ages of ages, to bring contemporaneously into action the properties of matter organized and unorganized, the soil, the seed, the moisture, the air, the light, the heat, the electri-

city, which must co-operate to produce the food of man, and to furnish the means of abundance, at the time when he was to inhabit the globe. This is not a mere occasional concurrence of forces, which might happen once in eternity by some fortunate accident: it is a steady association of many *systems of causes*, geological, meteorological, vegetative, and others, which might be in action distinct from one another.

The field becomes yet larger when account is taken of man himself, as a living and intelligent being. Many writers have dwelt at length on the wonders of his constitution in mind and body; and have successfully indicated the innumerable designs and adaptations which fit him for the world in which he dwells, and secure the permanence of the race. The yet deeper accommodation of the living soul to the material world has already been noticed at length. To say nothing of the astonishing design which is manifested in the *organs* of sense, the eye, the ear; there is some original relation between mind and matter, resting on their hidden properties or powers, in virtue of which the mind is sensitive to physical impressions. The eye discovers something of matter, the touch something different, the other senses something more. The ear would have been useless in a medium of light without one of sound; the eye in a medium of sound without light. Is it a happy accident that

the organs we have are so admirably fitted to communicate between the mind and the world; that the eye has light, and the ear sound, and the mind is so sensitive to both, and has besides its native power of combining its sensations in one image? Is it chance which has brought together, out of endless varieties in the forms and natures of possible things, exactly those primitive forces which are in suitable relation to one another, and has formed the substances of mind and matter, and qualified the mind to perceive and discern in the world precisely what man needs to know for the preservation and happiness of life? Or is it not more likely that One Cause is the cause of all things, that One Creator has, for wise ends, placed the human race in a world adapted and furnished for its existence? It is not a mere matter of probability, but a question of strict reason. Deny a First Cause, and the law of thought and being demands a number of causes, and then demands a cause of their combination and unity.

Letters of the Iliad.

4. The appeal to chance is futile and unmeaning. A past eternity would not suffice for the trials to be made before the happy subsidence of atoms in this world of ours. The old illustration is a good one. Let the letters of the Iliad be thrown into a bag, and drawn out one by one over and over again to all eternity. Reason cannot

conceive that they will ever to all eternity produce the Iliad. And yet the possible permutations may fall far short of the permutations of all monads which can exist. For it is not a question of the combination of those substances only which *do* exist, but of all the substances which lie within the infinite possibilities of things. In infinite space and time the monads or substances must be considered infinite in *number*. And since there is evident diversity, but nothing is known to limit the possible diversities, it is necessary, in estimating the dogmatic assertion that the world has been formed by the fortuitous concourse of atoms, to take account of an infinite number of *different kinds* of atoms, and these not only such as may combine, but such as have no relations to one another, and admit of no possible combination or arrangement. Besides the question, By what means have the atoms been disposed and arranged? positive atheism is open to the previous question, Whence their capability of arrangement? Is it by a happy chance that the eternal substances have fallen into their admirable order? Is it also by a happy chance that these eternal substances were so related to one another as to make it possible that they should associate at all, much more that they should co-operate to produce this glorious cosmos, this grand, and stable, and universal frame?

There is an inconceivably small possibility that the letters of the Iliad may be drawn from a bag in their proper order. The right letters have been taken, and they admit of many correct arrangements. But the case of atheism is far more hopeless. To pass over the objection, that he can have nothing to limit the number of his letters, and has therefore to form not only a large book like the Iliad, but one infinitely great, so that he can never have completed a single attempt at such arrangement; besides this, he is under the further difficulty, that he does not even know whether he has the right letters, or any that can combine to give meaning and unity to the whole. We come nearer to the case if we choose *at random* as many letters as compose the Iliad, and throw them into a bag. The arithmetical chance of drawing the Iliad is now an infinitesimal of the second order.

But it is not yet zero. No; nor is it parallel to our case. We must take our letters not from one alphabet, but from all which have been used in any tongue. There still remains a chance, that in choosing at random to eternity we shall at last select all the letters from the *Greek* tongue, and then the required letters from this tongue, and then draw them in their proper order from the bag.

The chance, it may be said, is not yet zero; there is still a small infinitesimal, and eternity is

long. But the cases are not even yet parallel. We may go on adding other classes of things, of whatever kind, to the alphabets, till we have exhausted all the existing things of the universe, and shall still fall short, it may be infinitely short, of the number of forms of possible existence. And it is from these forms that the atheist must draw his monads, and select and re-select them again and again, before he can find ground for his pretension that the universe may have originated in chance. In affirming the possibility of its formation by chance, he rashly assumes that he sees the whole of it; and that having seen all which is, he has seen all which can be. The astronomical vastness, all but infinite to man,—the geological permanence, all but eternal,—forbid his imposing a limit to the possible forms of eternal being. These also may be infinite.

Thus the dogmatic atheist, in pretending to account for the formation of the world, begins by supposing it all but made, when he assumes the existence and sole existence of its simple substances. Innumerable conditions, all of them, however, acting through one human nature, contributed to the formation of the Greek tongue; and it was not till it was formed, that one man, employing that language, could select the words and letters and combine them with intelligence in a perfect poem. Innumerable conditions were also

necessary to the possibility of the existing universe. Substances were to be chosen, monads were to be determined, and many relations were to be established, before it was possible they could combine. An eternity of trials is insufficient for the problem; an infinity of eternities is insufficient. One account, and one only, can satisfy the causal law and answer the conditions of all possible knowledge. An intelligent Being must have created and combined them. That Being is GOD. He is the One Cause of all diversity, and of all union of the diverse; of all simple forces, and of all their combinations. His nature is incomprehensible. But to man every thing is incomprehensible. This, however, he may know even of incomprehensibles,—this it falls within the limits of reason to affirm, that *One Incomprehensible* satisfies the conditions of all knowledge and gives a sufficient basis of the known; and that many incomprehensibles do not.

SECTION II.

SCEPTICAL OR NEGATIVE ATHEISM.

Believes in science.

5. Some professed atheists decline all inquiry into the unseen causes and secret nature of existence; maintaining such questions to be useless speculation, for which we possess no faculties, and no sources of information. They would limit the field of knowledge to the visible and phænomenal,

and would confine us to the observation of appearances, and the investigation of laws. Positive science is their philosophy; their religion, the material progress of the race; the illimitable universe is their temple; and Nature the incomprehensible goddess whom they worship.

There is enough, they will say, in the wonders of the visible, to employ the faculties, to give food to the imagination, and work to the energies of a being so short-lived as man. The study of nature's book in its instructive and pictured pages, has been already rewarded with splendid results. The child of this age knows more than the philosopher of ages past. Already have the phænomena of astronomy been brought within the nicest calculation, and all the motions of space reduced to a single and universal law. Science has advanced in its physical, its chymical, its physiological departments [1], and has vastly increased the comforts and the conveniences of life. It has alleviated the sufferings of man, and prolonged his existence; it is now extending itself to the more difficult question of social relation. It has done much already to remedy the evils of society, and bids fair to bring them to an issue. Nature, "inexorable to prayers," is often "propitiated by science;" while the search after truth, and the progress of know-

[1] According to M. Comte's Classification of the Sciences.

ledge have done more than the speculations of schoolmen, or the dogmas of divines, or the cant of sects, to enlighten the minds of the masses, and to elevate them in the scale of being. Science has increased our material comforts, while it has contributed to our mental development. It is a more attainable and a more wholesome food for the mind, than unintelligible abstractions and speculations. Man is formed by education, and there can be no purer oil than that of science, to feed the flame of human intellect, and hand it down bright and burning from age to age. Science is to effect what religion has not effected. Religion has been tried for ages, and has found no remedy for the appalling evils of imperfect social states. Science must regenerate society, and achieve the happiness of a golden age.

The total incompetency of this philosophy is shown by all the direct evidences of theism. Succeeding chapters will evince its disloyalty to reason, its inconsistency in assuming for its own foundation principles which it had pretended to ignore, its inability to meet the natural wants, to direct the aspirations, to give a purpose to the capacities of the soul. Some general observations may not be useless in this place.

Its vain pretensions.

6. And first upon its intolerant pretensions. The question is not between religion and science,

but between religion and no religion. Science has effected much, and will effect yet more to meliorate the condition of the human race. But does experience discover the progress of knowledge to be necessarily a progress of virtue? Granted that religion has not regenerated society, but have its principles been fairly accepted or applied? Its tendency, at all events, is to increase the sum of happiness; its law of love to God and man has this aim and purpose, and is successful in proportion to its influence. Science has no such law nor tendency. Though its chymistry were as perfect as its mathematics, and its physiology as its astronomy, though the philosophy of history had discovered all the springs of social changes, and had drawn forth all the wisdom of experience which the past can furnish to the present, yet there is nothing in all this to break the force of individual selfishness, nor therefore to bring us nearer to social perfection.

Social improvement is incompatible with the reign of selfishness. Recent history has shown that it is not to be introduced by calculation and brute force. The world has had some experience of hasty changes for which mankind were unprepared; and the result is a sufficient answer to the charge, that religion has not regenerated society. Its failure, even when it is held responsible for the crimes and follies of the irreligious, who shelter

themselves under its name and form,—its failure, though it be judged thus irrationally, has not been so signal, nor so terrible in results, as that of the philosophers and calculators, when they have had free scope for their *ideas*. It is in proportion as men become less selfish, that they will be prosperous in their social changes. The happiness of the many will be advanced, when each prefers it to his personal aggrandizement. There will be a happy era for humanity, when men shall feel that it is better to work for the good of all, than to pamper oneself, or outvie others, or to elevate one's family in the social scale. Sceptical atheism has recently accused Christianity of a tendency to impede progress, by making men indifferent to this world. Caution is little needed on such a point! When men appear so far regardless of it, as to desire general more than personal advantage, it will be soon enough to put them on their guard against carrying their indifference too far. In the mean time the Christian may talk less, but he will effect more towards the improvement of society, by following the law of his religion—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," than the positivist with all the laws and sciences of his system. They who know any thing of Christian life and history, have learnt the force and tendency of its influences in themselves, and in the many bright examples by which it has adorned the world.

7. Positive philosophy has no place for the questions which are the most interesting and important to the soul, the only questions which can be very momentous in so short a life,—'Whence is this Nature, and whence am I? What is the meaning of her hieroglyphics, and what light do they throw upon my destiny? Is death indeed to be my end, and to cut short the desire of immortality? Is this great goddess Nature so niggardly of her infinite treasures, as to allow me but the slender patrimony of these few years? Am I but a bubble on the great ocean of being, dashed for a moment in the air and then gone for ever; or am I the child of a great, and good, and universal Parent?'

The negative atheist may possess the common nature of mankind, the same powers of perception, reason, will, the affections of man, his sense of right, his sense of the true, the beautiful, the good; but his theory of knowledge rests on a part only of these undeniable facts of human nature. At least the facts of sensation are made unduly predominant. The will is mere mechanism, or a casual flitting from one feeling to another; the affections are capricious internal sensations, which serve for motives to action; it is needless to inquire into their origin or purpose, enough that they incite one to do something, in a life where to be indolent is to be wretched; duty is a law without

a magistrate; truth and goodness have no vindicator, and must therefore be secondary to interest, if the selfish feelings be stronger than the moral instincts.

Negative atheism avoids all question of man's origin, his destiny, his relations to God. It sees that nature has some tremendous secret to unfold, but the veil of Neith is still spread over all, and we hear only the riddle of the sphinx. "Nature," says one [2], "acts with a fearful uniformity, stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, merciless as death; too vast to praise, too inexplicable to worship, too inexorable to propitiate; its silence is profound, and when we ask its secret it points to death. But nature refers us to science for help, and to humanity for sympathy; love to the lovely is our only homage, study our only praise, quiet submission to the inevitable our duty, and work is our only worship." They look to science for help; and it adds a year or two to the average length of life, and accelerates their powers of locomotion: to humanity for sympathy; but it is to companions in suffering, who need consolation like themselves. Love to the lovely is their homage; and, if their knowledge rest in sensation, we will still believe their feelings to be a higher part of their nature, though unhallowed by the anticipation of immortal fellow-

[2] Mr. Holyoake. Discussion with Mr. Townley, p. 69.

ship. Study is their praise; but it excites only an adoration of barren wonder and mute astonishment. Others also can submit to the inevitable; though they believe not in inevitable evil. Others have said, "Work is our worship," "*Laborare est orare*," though they have not thought that work is to every one but the fruitless bustle of a few short years, which must prove to have been labour in vain.

And is there no unavoidable feeling in the breast of man, that the material universe with its wonders of order and beauty, with its all but infinite and eternal existence, is yet inferior to his own soul? Is it a mere egotistical illusion, that a creature of yesterday can cast his gaze towards the immensity, and feel—'Though newly sprung to life, I am more fearfully and wonderfully made, than this great universe of worlds: more wonderfully, for I can observe it and calculate its movements, but it sees not me; it has no knowledge nor understanding: more fearfully, for its order is fixed and stable, and it has no power to depart from it; in myself there is an awful choice to be made between order and disorder, and I am not bound in the necessity of nature.'

Scepticism professes humility.

8. Negative atheism makes professions of humility. "The language invented by Pope," it exclaims, "that we may look through nature up to nature's God has no signification for me, as I

know nothing besides nature, and can conceive of nothing greater. The majesty of the universe so transcends my faculties of penetration, that I pause in awe and silence before it[3]." "We stand in the great presence of nature, whose inspiration should be that of modesty, humility, and love[4]."

That the grandeur and magnificence of nature must impress the thoughtful observer with a sense of littleness, and a feeling of humility, the theist will readily allow. But what is humility? Is it a sceptical doubt upon every question not immediately cognizable by the senses; or a disposition to believe what nature teaches, to be consistent in the application of those mental principles on which all knowledge depends, and to apply them to the interpretation of all the facts of consciousness? To ask no questions, though nature prompts them; to repress the instinctive curiosity, to silence the universal convictions of the soul, and pronounce them delusions—is this the submissive modesty that becomes us? A child is naturally humble, and shows its humility in its disposition to be taught. Humility is not less open to the instruction which lies before it in the book of nature, than unwilling to dogmatize on the pages which are sealed. In the presence of nature, and those powers of nature which are of God, man is ever a

[3] Ibid. p. 8.

[4] Ibid. p. 41.

child. It becomes him, then, to be humble, and to be consistently so; to be humble, both in his examination of facts, and in pronouncing his judgment upon them.

But not consistently.

9. The atheist is inconsistent with his profession of humility, when, without strong support in facts, he confidently ascribes the universal belief in gods, or in the One God, to a delusion. It is always easy to make assertions, and this is one:—"In the distorted reflection of man's image on the wall, as it were, of the universe, arose the idea of gods[5]." Such an assertion without proof, and without any search for its foundation in that which is not the least mysterious of nature's works, —the soul of man, with its original faculties and knowledges,—such an assertion, hazarded as an explanation of a fact so notorious and universal as the belief in God, is scarcely consistent with professions of humility.

There can be no better reason for pronouncing this universal conviction to be a delusion, than might be alleged to discredit the universal knowledge of an external world. It is at least as conceivable and as probable that all we see is a delusion; that nothing exists but oneself, and all the rest are but the figures of a vision; as that those very principles of the understanding, which are called into

[5] Mr. Holyoake.

action before we can be aware of the existence of the world without us, are deceived in ascribing that existence to the power of a First and Living Cause.

Becomes dogmatic.

10. A similar observation applies to the same reasoner's theory of the eternity of matter. "There must always," he says, "have been something, or there could be nothing now. This the dullest feel. Hence we arrive at the idea of the eternity of matter[6]." In one respect this argument is satisfactory. It is gratifying to find that *something* which even the dullest feel is allowed to be true. They feel that out of nothing nothing can arise; that every thing phænomenal must have its cause. But is this assumption of the eternity of matter one to still their unavoidable feeling? Has it existed eternally in all its diversities? Is it a genus of eternal beings? Then the very principle of reason which has just been acknowledged, demands a cause of the relations and combinations of its various kinds. These can no more originate in nothing than the matter itself. Or does it exist without its properties, and are these generable and corruptible? Then,—to pass over the question, what do we know of matter without its properties? —again, the same principle demands a Cause of these properties themselves, as well as of their

[6] Ibid. pp. 8 and 40.

mutual relations; and especially a Cause of the origin of mind in matter. It is as irrational, we have already observed, to derive mind from matter, since the two are wholly incommensurable in all knowledge, or to suppose mind to originate in matter without a cause, as matter itself in non-entity.

And yet the only alleged foundations of this materialism, are the incomprehensibleness of the Creator, the incomprehensibleness of the act of creation, and the old questions, "Where was the Creator before any thing existed?" "Was there a time when the God over all was God over nothing?" These at least are questions which humility ought to have repressed. Reason might have suggested that, though time is the inseparable condition of all things knowable by man, we may be quite incompetent to pronounce upon its relations to the Supreme Being. Consistency should forbid it to be an objection to theism, that the existence of Him we see not, cannot be cleared of the very mysteries which must be confessed to lie in the nature that we see.

That His Nature must be unknown as well as known, is no more than might be expected; for even visible nature is unknown as well as known. We know her phænomenal garb, not the secret essence of her being. We require a cause or causes of what we see; and all causes are unknown

in themselves, whether they rest in nature, or depend upon One above nature. And yet in another sense they are not unknown, for they become known, even the most ordinary things of the material world, in no other way than as oxygen or electricity, by their effects.

This partial knowledge of nature, then, may bear us to a partial knowledge of One above nature, Whom, though we see Him not as He is, we may still know by His works. We cannot search the mysteries of material being, nor comprehend the manner of its existence. Reason assures us that it exists; and perceives it by its effects on the sensibility. It may also assure us of a Creator, and find indications of His Character in the world and in the soul, though His deep Nature likewise be unsearchable.

Thus the position of the negative atheist is untenable. He cannot but believe in something, and choosing eternal matter, shelters himself under a theory of positive atheism. He thus at once discards his humility, and exposes himself to all the difficulties of those systems.

Nor does he succeed better in arguing from the incomprehensibleness of creation. Till he knows how the material world *exists*, he can have little right to ask how it was created. He is satisfied that it *does* exist, and he may have the same certainty that its existence had a commencement.

When he shall have learnt to comprehend the manner of its existence, it is most probable that he will at the same time have learnt how it began to exist. Meanwhile reason may assure him of the one fact as well as of the other.

Whether we receive a theory of creation, or one of eternal matter, with its evolution of successive conditions;—in either case we rest on what is incomprehensible, and presently pass from the known to the unknown. Reason compels us to choose between creation and an eternal universe of ever-changing matter; between a First Cause transcendent to knowledge, and the extension to infinity of those subordinate causes which are before our eyes. But the eternity of matter, and the infinite chain, or the infinity of infinite chains of finite causes, fail to satisfy the conditions of the problem. Such indefinite *extension* of finite causes is conceivable. The notion is only too intelligible, since the extension to infinity can be seen to be irrational and impossible. We are thus compelled to acknowledge One First Cause of all, transcending the visible and the knowable.

Reason looks beyond the relative.

11. Thus reason herself, unless distorted by prejudice, or misled by partial views, directs us to the most humble judgment on the deep question of Being. In interpreting the delivery of the senses, when I look upwards to the starry deep of space,

or before me to the profundity of existence, it discovers that this universe of power and majesty, this "stupendous and mighty frame of nature," is but the outward appearance of a reality, discovered to me by means of the minute image, which fills but the fraction of an inch within my eye. But what is it to beings with other senses? What is it in itself? or, if nothing in itself, what in its dependence upon its cause? Reason can see its own incapacity. It shrinks from the assertion that what *we see* is the totality of what *is*. It will not ascribe infinity to that, which, though in appearance illimitable, is an appearance through a minute organ of sense; nor eternity to that which carries in itself the archives of ages beyond number, but exhibits them through an organism of yesterday. It cannot ascribe eternity to matter, as matter is known to man; nor all reality to matter, as matter is perceived by man; nor all efficiency to those finite causes, which are felt only in their action upon man: and beneath things as they are known to man, it finds no rest for thought, but in a Being who cannot be comprehended under the conditions of thought; no basis of real existence, but in One superior to what is seen or known, One who "fills all, changes never, and passes not away[7]."

Negative atheism finds its complete answer in all the evidences of theism. Enough has been

[7] Massillon.

said however to show that man is something more than matter, and may have confidence in One higher than himself. All reflection on thought and feeling corroborates this first feeling of humanity, this first dictate of common sense. If we have stood with the mourners by the open grave, and have seen before us the mound of earth, and the coffined dead, and the Christian minister to remind us of life and immortality; and in that moment have asked ourselves the question—Dead material earth is all that remains to us of a friend long known and loved; was he always but a mass of earth? Are the living but clay like the dead? Do they differ only in organization, or in internal movements of some mundane fluid like electricity? Are their falling tears but fated movements of watery drops; and their sorrows, their prayers, their hopes but eternally necessary vibrations of subtile particles of matter? If such a thought have occurred to us, we have shrunk from it with instinctive repugnance, as preposterous both to reason and to feeling, or we are destitute of those instincts, truthful or delusive, which are common to humanity.

The investigation of the principles of all knowledge, attention to the teaching of nature in the soul and in the world, discovers these instincts to be as truthful, and their conviction as certain, as any knowledge that man can possess.

CHAPTER VI.

PANTHEISM.

1. MANY different theories of existence and systems of unbelief must be classed under the name of pantheism. They are generally more attractive to speculative minds, and more self-consistent than systems of materialism.

In pantheistic systems nature is regarded either as itself the Supreme Being, or as a constituent part, or the outward manifestation of His Essence. All the systems agree in the doctrine of eternal universal fatalism.

Material atheism admits the manifest existence of the world, and denies that of its Divine Author. Pantheism assumes the truth of one necessary and eternal Being, but either identifies Him with the world, regarding the progressive development of material existence as the evolution of the whole Divine Nature, and its adequate representation; or it makes the world to be but one of many finite

and necessary evolutions of Infinite Being, but still an essential and inseparable part of it.

The difference between atheism and pantheism may sometimes be a mere matter of words. Both admit the unavoidable truth that something has existed from eternity; both affirm the universe to be eternal. It is often therefore a mere verbal question between them, whether or no to call it by the Sacred Name. It is sometimes said that pantheism attributes unity of intelligence and consciousness to eternal nature. But this is not the case in all systems of pantheism; not even in Spinoza's, which makes the infinite intelligence to be the totality of all finite minds.

Systems of pantheism.

2. *Pantheism Proper* identifies nature with Deity. It makes the double assertion that all things are God, and that God is all things. The Infinite Being is only the totality of all finite being.

Other pantheistic or semi-pantheistic systems affirm that all things are God, thus deifying the universe with all its parts and manifestations; but do not affirm the Supreme Being to be no more than the sum of all things which are known, or can be known to man. They may acknowledge the visible and the comprehensible to be but one of infinite manifestations, of a Being whose whole nature is unsearchable.

Of pantheism proper there are two classes of systems which must be viewed as distinct. They may be called *physical* and *intellectual pantheism*[1], or possibly objective and subjective pantheism.

SECTION I.

PHYSICAL PANTHEISM.

Soul of the world.

3. In these systems the world is God. The Divine Being possesses real, objective existence with unity of consciousness and intelligence. The world, then, is regarded as a living and thinking being; not like a huge and growing plant, but like an animal with a rational and sensitive soul! It is the old doctrine of the Stoics which has been already mentioned. The hylozoic atheism comes nearer to pantheism than the common material systems. It regards all matter as possessing latent powers of life, but as attaining to self-consciousness and intelligence only under particular circumstances. There is therefore no unity of mind or thought. Intellectual pantheism also denies unity of intelligence to its self-existent being. But it maintains an unity of being in the essence or substance which lies beneath the world of appearance; an unity of the noumenon of all phænomena. It may differ therefore from hylozoic atheism only in its conceptions, not in any objective meaning of

[1] I am not aware whether these terms have been employed; but they appear to be very necessary.

them. But in physical pantheism the energies of life and intelligence are supposed to meet in the unity of a world-spirit, whether in the "fiery matter" of the sphere, as in the ancient systems, or in the electricity or other mundane fluid.

The Stoical pantheism has had great influence, and has been prevalent in the philosophy of almost all nations, especially in ancient times. The same, or a similar system, has been revived in the present day, and seems not unlikely to be the last resource of atheism.

Modern spiritualism.

4. Its revival is due to the American and other "spiritualists," and is founded on the facts and impostures (for there are both) connected with mesmerism, "table-moving," and the "spiritual manifestations." It is not necessary to give any opinion upon these subjects. Suffice it that numbers of people have been so far satisfied respecting them as to make no question of the facts, and have gone on to discuss how they are to be accounted for[2].

The pretensions of spiritualism appear to find some support in the popular notions of all ages, whether true or superstitious. They appeal to the language of Scripture respecting witchcraft and dæmoniacal possession, and also to the opinions

[2] Thus in Beecher's "Review of the Spiritual Manifestations," this is the only point of inquiry.

of the early Christians upon spiritual agency, and to their common practice, and even accustomed rites, of exorcism. The extant writings of the early centuries show that the Christians were wont to ascribe the heathen oracles not to imposture, but to the agency of evil dæmons. Notions of this kind, like many common fancies, and family traditions, and popular tales, which may be associated with them, have in later times been looked upon as superstitions.

But some Christians have been of opinion that the agency of spirits was permitted in former times, and especially at the epoch of Redemption, to an extent which has since been prohibited by the Divine Will. It has even been conjectured that similar manifestations, and perhaps a reign of atheism or antichrist, instigated and led by evil spirits, will precede the second advent of the Messiah.

In connexion with these subjects of mesmerism and the rest, the question has been discussed, How are the facts to be accounted for? Widely different theories have been started, and among them one very analogous to the old doctrine of the soul of the world, which is sometimes thought to have been suggested to the ancients by a deep knowledge of man's relations to nature [3].

[3] A passage in Mad. de Staël's Germany is curious at present (1853). "The German men of science," she says, "appear to admit

5. The modern theory founds itself upon Reichenbach's recent discovery (as some believe it, though it is much questioned), that there is an imponderable agent distinct from electricity, and manifesting itself under different conditions, which pervades not only the bodies of all creatures, but the earth and all space. This agent, whether it exist or not, has received the name of odyle. It is conjectured to be the agent in animal magnetism and kindred phænomena.

This discovery, it seems, is to supply the deficiencies of materialism. It makes the world to be a living being, and renders it unnecessary to look farther for a First Cause. The animated world itself is the great cause of causes. Its diffused spirit is the source of all spiritual existence. As the bodies of men are formed of the dust to return to dust again, so their souls are derived from the great odylic ocean which pervades all things and permeates every part of space. They appear for a time to exist as individually distinct, but are really no more distinct than water in different vials moving about in the same ocean [4]. When

from their manner of exhibiting some phænomena of animal magnetism, that the will of man, without any external act, exerts a very great influence over matter, and especially over metals." "There were perhaps of old more intimate relations between man and nature than now exist." Certain ancient religious systems are also mentioned as "vestiges of some curious attraction which united man with the universe."

[4] This illustration is from Indian pantheists, and is quoted by

the bottles break the water is reunited to the ocean, and in like manner the soul at death, or, according to some old systems, after various transmigrations loses its apparent individuality, and is resumed into the great soul of the world.

Remarks on this pantheism.

6. On this theory a few observations are necessary. If it maintain the eternal and independent existence of universal matter and its universal soul, it is open to most of the obvious difficulties of materialism. If it seek to avoid them by regarding the odylic soul as the single first cause and principle of all things, from which the matter of the world derives both its existence and its properties, and the world itself its adaptations and harmonies of arrangement, the system may then become rather a spurious theism than an atheism. It may be chargeable with a degrading conception of the Deity, rather than the denial of His Being, and possibly differs from true theism only in assumptions for which it has no foundation.

Undoubtedly there is a true doctrine of an omnipresent Divine influence in the universe; and it is not inconsistent with theism or with Scripture, that the continued existence of all things

Bayle from Bernier. See also Leibnitz, Theod. Discours. de la conformité, &c., § 8. He says, "Plusieurs alloient à croire que Dieu est cette âme universelle, quoique d'autres aient cru qu'elle étoit subordonnée et créée." He finds the doctrine in Virgil, Æn. vi. 724. Georg. iv. 221.

depends on the perpetual going forth of energy from the Almighty. The Christian theist believes that He is present in all His works, and may hold their existence to be the continued effect of His immanent presence and operation. It was held, in fact, by almost all the early Christian writers, that a certain sustaining and vivifying spirit had been infused into the material world by its Creator, and was thought by many, and, according to a very learned and accurate interpreter of their writings[5], by most of them, and by those of the highest authority, "that the same Spirit which animates and inspires the minds of holy men controls and sustains the universe." The Holy Spirit is, on this doctrine, the vivifying Spirit of nature. It would hardly have been admitted by any of these writers that a subtile fluid, electricity, or odyle, which can be made perceptible to the senses and obedient to the will of an experimenter, belongs to the Divine essence, or is any thing more than a subordinate agent[6]. But the connexion between the Divine agency and the Divine nature is a difficult and inexplicable question. It will be shown hereafter that the notion of an extended Divine essence is

[5] Mosheim on Cudworth, vol. ii. p. 345, note.

[6] Tatian, I find, has distinctly, Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεὸς οὐ δίηκον διὰ τῆς ὕλης, πνευμάτων δὲ ὑλικῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ σχημάτων κατασκευαστής. (Orat. 12.) The doctrine is stated to the same effect by Clemens (Strom. v. xiii. p. 590); and by Origen (c. Cels. vi. 71) in reply to Celsus, who charged the Christians with the Stoical doctrine.

irrational and inadmissible; but it is not necessarily atheistic.

The full answer to this doctrine is to be found in the various evidences which may be adduced for the being and attributes of God. Whatever be His essence, or manner of existence, He is the adequate self-sufficient Cause of all things; the Author not only of a universe of mechanical and chymical forces, but of rational agents who may direct themselves according to motives which rest in thought. From his own nature and constitution man gains a knowledge, though infinitely inadequate, of the Giver of life. His intelligence directs him to an intelligent First Cause; his moral nature indicates a moral Governor; his affections assure him of a loving Father in the living God.

A self-existent nature of mechanical causes, whether residing in gross matter or in subtile fluids, would have made man a mechanical automaton. If this pantheistic system admit the soul of the world to be intelligent, the question arises —Is this intelligence a power of creating the motives of action and of forming designs; or is it but a self-conscious activity, which may be as much a mechanical cause as if it were devoid of consciousness? Whatever evidences natural theology may possess, that the Creator is not a mere self-conscious energy, but One Who acts with De-

sign, Whose motives are Eternal Wisdom and Goodness, the same evidences apply to a creative soul of the world.

This pantheistic system in common with all others maintains an eternal fatalism; but it may thus be compelled to allow that wisdom is the necessary law of this fatalism, and goodness its eternal motive. It may thus be forced to the admission that the Supreme Creator possesses the attributes of a living and a loving Father. A living Cause who acts with Intelligence, even though His action be conceived necessary, is not One who will endow creatures with feelings and aspirations capable of rising to Himself, and seeming to find in Him their happiest and most ennobling service, unless He be Himself such as to be the object of these feelings, and to give to these aspirations their satisfaction.

Again: while this system can give no proof of its assumption that the Creator is inseparable from nature, we shall find evidences of the opposite truth that He exists superior to nature, and above all human knowledge. To affirm that He is not distinct from nature can be, at the best, but an ungrounded assumption. Nature is full of His presence, and goodness, and operation; but though present in it, He is superior to it. We can find no vestige of evidence that He is confined to it, either

locally, or in any intelligible notion of substantial being.

But it is impossible to have too deep a conviction of His presence in the world. Whatever unity may belong to the ultimate ground of all being; whatever the deep nature of the self-existent Creator, or His relations to the creatures; whatever the reality of those eternal attributes which manifest themselves in love and holiness to mankind, it deeply concerns us to find in ourselves and in the world, the assurances that the Author of our being deals with us as a Friend and Father; to know that in our sphere of individual life, the sphere of human thought and feeling, we can find indications that this form of being will be continued beyond the present life. We have reason to acknowledge that, however far He may be exalted above the nature which our dim eyes can discern, and our finite minds imagine, yet, in the words of revelation—"In Him we live and move and have our being," and "He is not far from every one of us."

SECTION II.

INTELLECTUAL PANTHEISM.

Account of it.

7. The world of appearance is presented to us as a world of diversities and even inconsistencies; but according to these systems of pantheism, it is One substance or essence in itself, that is, beneath

all that appears to man, and is the very substance or essence of the Infinite Being. The Supreme Being is thus the noumenon, the world we see the phænomenon. He is the *natura naturans*, of which the *natura naturata* is before our eyes; and visible nature is the evolution of His Infinite Being, under the two forms of mind and matter, or thought and extension. Mind and matter are therefore regarded as only phænomenally distinct. In their deep nature they are one and inseparable from one another.

It is evident that the reality or substratum of either mind or matter, without reference to its phænomena, is a bare intellectual conception, divested of all attributes by which it can be said to be known. In themselves unknown except as causes, they are regarded by human faculties, and *must* be regarded, as mediately known, and measured by their phænomena. But the Substance, or Original Being, or God of intellectual pantheism is either the empty conception itself, or, if we attempt to give it meaning, we must view it under the common properties of mind and matter. Its Supreme Being is thus either a bare notion, or the sum or totality of all finite things. Intelligence, for instance, belongs to the phænomenal world; *the real* therefore, that is God, cannot in this system be said to be intelligent, but only to attain intelligence in finite beings.

It will generally be found, on close examination, that intellectual pantheism is undistinguishable from atheism, except by certain grandiloquent expressions which closely resemble the language of theism, and are apt to deceive the unwary, but are words and conceptions without meaning or object.

Spinoza's pantheism.

8. It will not be irrelevant to our subject, and will aid us in understanding the principles of pantheism, and their relations to theism, to pay some attention to the celebrated system of Spinoza. This may be thought perhaps a needless task [7], but recent experience has shown that he holds, in all the recurring phases of pantheism, a place as prominent as Hume in scepticism. He is the coryphæus of pantheists. His name and system are continually brought to the surface in the meanders of speculation. Not but that his theory is substantially the same as many which preceded it, both in ancient times and in the middle ages; but in modern literature it dates its origin from him, and finds in his writings its most logical deduction, and most consistent development.

Pantheism has been very conspicuous among the philosophic systems of Germany, and has of late years not been without influence in our own country. There are many signs of a revival of

[7] Spinoza's demonstrations are pronounced by Leibnitz, "pitoyables ou non-intelligibles." Op. p. 179.

the speculative spirit which has been long dormant, and pantheism is already one of its results. Among Christians it is sometimes spoken of as "the only consistent system of unbelief[8]," and there are not a few who, with Lessing, look on it "as the only possible philosophy[9]," and the natural and certain result of speculative inquiries. Hence timid writers, distrusting the faculties which God has given, and which distinguish man from the brutes, will sometimes warn us to turn from such investigations without seeking to ascertain the limits of certainty, lest we see God and man, mind and matter, swallowed up in pantheistic nihilism.

To discover the weakness of Spinozism in its foundations should be no difficult undertaking. But it has sometimes been attempted with little success. Dr. Clarke's examination of it has been already mentioned. Bayle's article can hardly pretend to be a confutation, although he has just remarks, and deduces consequences from the system which cannot fail to make it odious to its enemies. Its advocates are not to be met except on their own ground.

Examination of Spinoza's system.

9. This famous system, developed in the "Ethics" of Spinoza, rests entirely on the principle of Des

[8] I have read these words, I think in Dr. Pusey.

[9] "Es giebt keine andere Philosophie als die Philosophie des Spinoza." Quoted in the preface to Bruder's Spinoza.

Cartes, that whatever notion of the mind is clear and distinct, is an adequate expression of objective truth. So far does Spinoza carry this power of the mind, that he sometimes asserts, and in one of his propositions pretends to demonstrate, that the human mind has an adequate cognition of the eternal and infinite essence of God [10].

To estimate the worth of the system, we must pay attention to its foundation in its definitions. These are all founded on the assumption, that the human mind is a living mirror, which can read, imaged in itself, the pictured realities of being; and that the definitions and logical processes of pure intellect, are adequate expressions of these realities.

Thus the first definition [1] represents "a cause of itself," or a self-existent cause, to be "that, the essence of which involves existence, or that, the nature of which cannot be conceived as non-existent." And the third [2] defines substance to be "that which exists in itself and is conceived by itself; or that, the conception of which is independent of any thing else."

[10] Ethics, Pars ii. Prop. xlvii. "Mens humana adæquatam habet cognitionem æternæ et infinitæ essentiæ Dei." See "De Intell. Emend." § 91, &c.

[1] Def. I. "Per *causam sui* intelligo id, cujus essentia involvit existentiam, sive id, cujus natura non potest concipi nisi existens."

[2] Def. III. "Per *substantiam* intelligo id quod in se est et per se concipitur; hoc est id, cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debeat."

BOOK I. CHAP. VI. Assumed impossibility of creation.

This third definition, in connexion with one of the axioms, gives us at once by assumptions a leading doctrine of the system. The axiom [3] states that "the cognition of an effect depends upon that of the cause and involves it." No effect can be known by itself, and therefore since what is known by itself is identical with what exists in itself (Def. III.), no effect can exist in itself; or, in other words, no created thing can possess independent being. No creature, in short, can be separate from the Creator; but that which possesses present existence of its own must be eternally self-existent.

There is here, then, a concealed assumption of what only needs to be distinctly stated, and it is at once seen to be beyond possible knowledge [4]. He assumes, and then pretends to prove, what it must be impossible for man to know.

If we inquire into the source of error, it may be observed at once that both the definitions are double. An author is at liberty, provided he preserve consistently the meaning of his terms, to define them as he may think proper. At least a consistent misuse of words does not prove a system

[3] Axiom iv. "Effectus cognitio a cognitione causæ dependet et eandem involvit."

[4] No objection can be founded on the fact that in Def. III. we have "conceptus substantiæ," and in Ax. iv. "cognitio;" for Spinoza himself, in Prop. vi., substitutes "cognitio" for "conceptus" in referring to the axiom. In fact this confusion of conceptions with knowledge is the fundamental principle of the system, and its fundamental error.

to be false. But he is not at liberty to give two definitions of the same thing, without showing them to be identical. A self-existent cause may be defined to be that whose essence involves existence, or that which cannot be conceived as non-existent. But it cannot be defined in both ways, unless they are known to be identical. The one has reference to being, the other to the mind's conceptions; but we have no proof (and can have none) that that which the mind conceives as self-existent, is exactly that which does of itself exist.

Similar observations apply to Def. III. It was perfectly allowable in this and in Def. V.[5] to divide all objective existence into the two mental classes of substances and modes, or independent and dependent entities; but we cannot know that any division of conceptions will correspond to the reality of things.

Only one substance.

But supposing it to have been established by these definitions, that substance cannot be created, it is still possible that there may be many self-existent substances. The next step is to reduce them to one, and this is accomplished (Props. IV. and V.) by a similar confusion between conceptions and things, which is here a confusion between things distinct in themselves and things distinguished by the mind. But we need not enter

[5] "Per *modum* intelligo substantiæ affectiones, sive id quod in alio est, per quod etiam concipitur."

upon the wretched logomachy which so readily perplexes the question of identity and diversity, especially in connexion with a system which pretends to measure universal being by human conceptions.

Having professed to show that but one substance can exist, and that it must be infinite (Prop. VIII.), he goes on, in Prop. XI., to give demonstrations of the being of God. These also are founded on conceptions, and are similar to Des Cartes', which will be noticed in a succeeding chapter.

It appears, then, that these definitions and propositions are a mere show of demonstration. They may effect certain distinctions and classifications of ideas, but can add nothing to our knowledge of being. Spinoza almost admits as much (Prop. VIII. Schol. II.), when he says that the conclusions of his preceding propositions amount to nothing more than men would easily receive as axiomatic, did they only allow themselves to reflect. Beyond question reason is naturally disposed to believe in one real Being, self-existent and infinite. But it cannot show, much less assume as self-evident, that no created being can possess in himself any attribute or power, communicated once for all in the act of creation. On the contrary, it is not difficult to see that such an assertion can rest on nothing less than a knowledge of

the whole mystery of existence. A man cannot know beforehand what will be the action of a machine when it shall be set a going, unless he be acquainted with its construction and properties. Much less can he know what will be the agency of the great First Cause, unless he have complete insight into His Nature. He sees material creation as it is, a great machine in action; he sees its intelligent beings possessed, so far as he can apprehend, of a power to originate their actions; but to know how this power is possessed, or how communicated, he must himself be equal with the Creator.

Spinoza's fatalism.

10. A few words on the fatalism of the system. This again is founded on a definition. He says (Def. VII.): "That thing shall be called free, which exists by the sole necessity of its nature, and is determined to action by itself alone; but necessary or rather constrained, when it is determined by something else to exist and act in a certain and determinate way[6]."

We have here another double definition, which begs the whole question of fatalism. It assumes that nothing is determined to action by an origi-

[6] "Ea res *libera* dicetur, quæ ex sola suæ naturæ necessitate existit, et a se sola ad agendum determinatur; *necessaria* autem vel potius *coacta*, quæ ab alio determinatur ad existendum et operandum certa ac determinata ratione."

nating power of its own, now residing in itself, unless it exist necessarily and eternally. But we have seen that we cannot know an independent being to be necessarily self-existent. A created being may therefore be independent both in present existence and in action.

And more than this; it is possible, as far as man can know, and Spinoza has nothing better than assumption to the contrary, that a being always dependent in existence may possess an independent power of action. An objection, indeed, has been expressed as follows by another writer:—

"It is not conceivable how an independent attribute should exist in a dependent subject. Can the attribute be infinite when the subject of its inhesion, as well as the other attributes inhering with it, are finite? This would make the attribute rise in excellence above its subject, just the same absurdity as to suppose the effect may be more perfect than its cause[7]."

To omit irrelevant observations on minor points which are here open to remark, it seems a sufficient reply on the point before us, that we can form no conception of the subject distinct from its attributes, nor of independent or dependent existence except as power original or derived. In so

[7] "Inquiry into the Origin of Human Affections," published in 1747. In Parr's Tracts, p. 133.

far then as the powers are independent, the being or subject, who is known as the combination of these powers, is independent. It is therefore conceivable, and may be possible, as far as can be known, that the same being may be partly independent, partly dependent. It is perhaps not improbable that man is a mysterious combination of ever-deriving life and once imparted energy. It is conceivable that his originating power, though given him once for all, may be continued under conditions which are maintained through a derivation of other powers of life; just as the law may secure a man in the absolute possession of his estate, although he is dependent upon health and life for its enjoyment.

Is Spinozism atheistic ?

11. There is nothing more remarkable in the history of opinion, than the opposite language which has been held upon the character and tendency of Spinoza's pantheism. Though generally considered atheistic and impious [8], it is sometimes spoken of as a sublime system of truth, which has been sadly misunderstood by weakness and prejudice; and its author as not only a virtuous, but a "God-intoxicated man," one who "in holy innocence and deep

[8] "Cet impie de nos jours, qui faisait son Dieu de l'univers, n'en avait point. C'était un véritable athée." Malebranche, Entretiens, viii. 9.

humility gazed upon the eternal world, and was full of religion and the Holy Spirit[9]."

Such is a common opinion of the system in Germany; and it has, of late years, been introduced with similar eulogies to the British public[1]. On this account, and from its influence in modern philosophy, it deserves a short attention to see whether it be the disguised atheism it has been represented, or no.

The system is founded on high intellectual notions of the absolute and self-existent Being. Such conceptions are natural to the cultivated intelligence, and direct it to a Being of Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. But the God of Spinoza will be found to be the God of atheism, decked out with sublime conceptions which belong to the living God, but are here hollow and unmeaning.

Its one Being or substance is represented as the immanent cause of all things, and the purport of this doctrine may appear far from atheistic, especially when it is confirmed by reference to the sacred Scriptures. But suspicion is excited when God is declared to be the *natura naturans*, of which all other things are the *natura naturata*. It looks as if God and nature are really identical,

[9] Eulogies by Novalis and Schleiermacher, often quoted.

[1] See e. g. Oxford and Cambridge Review, Oct. 1847.

and only distinguished with reference to our modes of conception. He is known by reason as a substance underlying the world, of which nature is the adequate representation. The meaning becomes still more evident, when we find the two classes of facts, those of mind and matter, declared to be modifications of Divine attributes, *thought* and *extension*[2]; and that the mind of man is a part of the Infinite intellect of God[3].

It is still possible, however, that all this may be, not complete atheism, but an exaggerated doctrine of the abiding connexion between God and the world. Even Dr. Clarke goes along with Spinoza in affirming that infinity and eternity, or infinite extension and thought, are modes or attributes of God. The question is, whether the universe is a total evolution of the fulness of Infinite Being; or there is a Divine essence surpassing the power which dwells in nature, though including it as an essential part of itself.

We begin to hope it may be so: for extension and thought, though attributes of God, are only two of many[4], which cannot all be known by the

[2] Eth. ii. 1 and 2; and i. 15, Schol. "Conclusimus substantiam extensam unum ex infinitis Dei attributis esse."

[3] Eth. ii. 11 Corol.

[4] Epist. lx. "Non dico me Deum omnino cognoscere, sed me quædam ejus attributa, non autem omnia neque maximam intelligere partem." This statement, then, must modify Eth. ii. 47, quoted above.

mind of man[5]. But on further attention we find that, whatever other attributes there may be, there can still be no other world in which they unfold themselves, than this universe of which we are parts: for extension and thought, the two known attributes, are only different conceptions of this one world[6]; and all possible attributes can only be so many more conceptions possible to infinite intellect, but not to man, of this one world[7]. In short, it is in the universe, which is always and essentially one, though it may be viewed under infinite varieties of form by infinite varieties of intellect, that we are to find the essential unity, in which all the infinite attributes are combined. The unknown attributes of the so-called self-existent Being, in no way exalt his nature to be superior to the universe, but only include other manifestations of nature, or other forms of intuition or thought, which may be conceived as possibly belonging to the universe which we know.

This universe then,—nature with its intelligent beings, in all its eternal developments and evolu-

[5] Ep. lxvi. "Concludo mentem humanam nullum Dei attributum præter hæc posse cognitione assequi."

[6] Ethics, iii. 2, Schol. "Mens et corpus una eademque res est, quæ jam sub cogitationis, jam sub extensionis attributo concipitur." See also ii. 21, Schol.

[7] Ethics, ii. 7, Schol. "Sive naturam sub attributo extensionis, sive sub attributo cogitationis, sive *sub alio quocunque*, concipiamus, unum eundemque ordinem, sive unam eandemque causarum connexionem, hoc est, easdem res invicem sequi reperiemus," &c.

tions,—nature is God: not indeed, as materialism says, the mere visible and tangible nature of sensation, but that which lies beneath it, which is adequately expressed in it, and is known by the attributes of extension and thought. Spinoza does nothing more in allowing his deity other attributes besides these two, than affirm, what every theist must affirm of the created world, that the mind of man can perceive it only under certain conditions, or in its relation to himself, and cannot understand what it may be to other minds, and in other relations.

Ethics of the system.

12. It is not surprising that lofty conceptions and speculations respecting the Divine nature, which are found when analyzed to reduce the Almighty to a nonentity, should carry along with them an ethical system assuming the tone of an elevated morality of theism; but which also, on closer examination, turns out to be equally hollow, at least in its theistic pretensions. This is the case with the works of Spinoza. Numerous passages may be adduced, which, considered alone, would seem to show that we have here a philosophy identifying virtue with wisdom, and directing us to a high standard of goodness. We expect to learn something of the dignity and excellence to which human nature may aspire.

And there are passages too which may warn the

fatalist, that notwithstanding the paramount necessity of all things, he is free within his province; and, as a part of nature, possesses a part of nature's powers within himself[8]. He is subject indeed to evil passions and affections which he cannot at once eradicate[9], but he is able to moderate them by his intelligence[1]. He can form a "clear conception" of all passions to which he is subject, and has only to understand the affection which troubles him, to gain some power over it and to direct it[2].

The conclusions on this subject appear to be equivalent in meaning to those of Bishop Butler and other Christian writers, that the doctrine of fatalism is not inconsistent with man's moral responsibility. In fact, it is possible to hold the atheism of Spinoza along with a theory of duty; and to give the theory its practical effect, under the hope of present or eternal happiness following upon right conduct, and the fear of misery upon wrong; not however through any Divine Agency or moral Will of the Creator, but in the natural and necessary connexions of eternal things. Assuredly

[8] Tract Theol.-pol. cap. iv. § 3. "Et quamvis absolute concedam, omnia ex legibus universalibus naturæ determinari ad existendum et operandum certa ac determinata ratione; dico tamen has leges ex placito hominum pendere. Quia homo, quatenus pars est naturæ, eatenus partem potentiæ naturæ constituit."

[9] Eth. lib. iv.

[1] Eth. lib. v.

[2] Eth. v. Props. 3 and 4.

the moral laws of creation are manifested in the soul of man, as the physical laws in the world; and the atheist may have regard to those as well as these, though he do not see that law must be the rule of intelligent agency. He is otherwise imprudent as well as irrational.

But we shall be much mistaken, if we think the ethical doctrines of Spinoza to be at all inconsistent with the inherent atheism of his system. He talks indeed, and in lofty terms, of obedience to laws human and divine. But we find, on attention, that these laws are so called, only "in the sense in which philosophers call by the name of laws, the common rules of nature, according to which all things happen [3]." Human laws indeed are prescribed and enforced by authority, and society is the combination of individuals for aiding and constraining one another in subduing passion to reason, for the general benefit. Justice then is nothing more than the will of the community [4]. But Divine commands are so called, because they are prescribed as if by God Himself, in so far as His existence is posited by our minds [5]. Divine

[3] Tract. Theol.-pol. cap. xvi. 53, note. "Deum amare, eo sensu legem appellavi, quo philosophi communes naturæ regulas, secundum quas omnia fiunt, leges vocant."

[4] Eth. iv. 37, Schol. 2.

[5] Tract. Theol.-pol. iv. 13. "*Jussa Dei* vocari possunt, quia quasi ab ipso Deo, quatenus in nostra mente existit, nobis præscribuntur."

commands are obligatory as such, and are so considered, only so long as we are ignorant of their cause [6]. So again the love of God is the highest blessedness of man, and the final aim and tendency of all human actions [7]; but this love is nothing more than an intellectual cognition. It is the chief good because man's best part is his intellect, and there can be no right exercise of the intellect [8], no cognition nor certitude, no freedom from an inconstant and fluctuating mind [9], unless we have a distinct idea of God, without Whom nothing can be, nothing can be conceived [1]. And this cognition of God is moreover nothing better than a cognition of nature, which is a cognition not merely of Divine Agency, but of the Divine Essence. "The greater our knowledge of nature," he says, "the more perfect our knowledge of the Divine Essence, which is the Cause of all things." "He therefore is necessarily most perfect, and partakes of the highest happiness, who loves above all things the intellectual cognition of God, the most Perfect Essence, and delights in it the most [2]."

This then is certainly a consistent system of unbelief. It is quite consistent with itself, and is consistently developed in the various writings of its author. Grant it the assumed premises, and it

[6] Ib. xvi. 53, note.
[7] Ib. iv. 14.
[8] Ib. iv. 10.
[9] Ib. 21.
[1] Ib. 10.
[2] Ib. 11 and 12.

deduces all its conclusions with strict and fearless logic. There is no God Who can be regarded as Lord of the universe[3], or Judge of men; none to whom man can desire to be obedient and acceptable[4]; none even in any sense above nature or distinct from it. Good and evil, praise and blame, order and confusion, beauty and deformity, are nothing in themselves, but mere subjective forms of the imagination, and relations of things as they appear to man[5]. Nay, the very intellectual perception of the mind, which is the highest bliss and noblest energy of man, is a part of that Infinite Love, with which the Supreme Being loves Himself[6].

Its false pretences.

13. Pantheism is thus an arrogant refusal to believe in a God who "passeth knowledge." M. Saisset speaks of this philosophy as a tendency of the human mind, and gives occasion to an English reviewer[7] to pronounce it "*the* tendency of *the* human mind." So it is, whenever *the* human mind presumptuously assumes that the Infinite

[3] He is very urgent on this point. "Nemo ea quæ volo percipere recte poterit, nisi magnopere caveat, ne Dei potentiam cum humana regum potentia vel jure confundat." Eth. ii. 3, Schol.

[4] What is meant by "Deo acceptum esse" he cannot understand. Epist. xxxvi.

[5] Eth. i. App. Ep. xv.

[6] Eth. v. 36. "Mentis amor intellectualis erga Deum, est ipse Dei amor, quo Deus se ipsum amat."

[7] Oxford and Cambridge Review, Oct. 1847.

and Eternal can be measured by its finite faculties. The natural result of such an attempt is, what we have seen in Spinoza, to deify the mind itself, and to engender a self-satisfaction, or a self-contemplation, which is tantamount to self-worship. The world must receive some better evidence than has yet been offered, of the legitimacy of this preposterous assumption, before it will believe that "the current of its thought has been turned and its religious destinies re-directed" by *this* "child of the race of Shem;" or that his system is "what all great philosophies and all great religions have struggled towards from the beginning until now, and been only powerful as they have partaken of its fulness."

Pantheism has no God. It usurps the name for an empty conception; and pretends to give it meaning by the attributes of extension and thought. But the one is extended nonentity, the other a mere abstraction. Goodness, and beauty, and truth have no relations to the Divine Essence, order and harmony are no characters of His operation, love has no residence in His nature. As extended nonentity is nothing, so thought is nothing where intelligence, love, goodness, and every particular mental affection are excluded.

Pantheism leads on the inquirer with high-sounding words, and plausible promises of Divine knowledge. It will discover to him the self-exist-

ent Being, not degraded by the conceits of anthropomorphism ; it amuses him for a time,

"Prensantem nequicquam umbras;"

it digs deep in the mine of speculation, and brings him to the sepulchre of Rosicrusius. He thinks he has found an ever-burning, an eternal light. He approaches it, and it is suddenly extinguished, and leaves him bewildered in the darkness.

SECTION III.

SEMI-PANTHEISM.

Its doctrine.

14. Other pantheistic systems may hold a doctrine of the Divine Nature, more or less removed from the impiety of the preceding. The universe in all its parts and manifestations of matter and life, of good and evil, may be regarded as an essential and inseparable part of the Divine Nature, but not the total evolution of Infinite Being. On this hypothesis all things are God, but He is more than the all of nature. His deep Essence may be confessed, as by the theist, to be unsearchable.

Such a pantheism may verge upon a doctrine of emanation, which makes the finite and mutable to be necessary emanations from the Infinite, that pass from it, and return to it, as the mists from the ocean, but leave it unchanged in itself. In like manner, an emanation theory may approximate closely to proper theism.

The error of these pantheisms may consist in a false and ungrounded opinion of the creation and dependence of the universe, and its relations to the Creator, rather than in the complete denial of His being or attributes. Their leading doctrine is that of the necessity of creation, or divine fatalism.

Divine fatalism.

15. This indeed is a characteristic of every pantheism. Its systems may often be undistinguishable from atheism; but they can take no other name, if they admit *chance* to their universe. An atheistic system may maintain an eternal fatalism, but when it does, it differs from pantheism rather in name than in purport, or even conceptions [8]. It is conceivable certainly, that a speculator who derives the mind of man from a fortuitous concourse of atoms, may go on and assign the same base parentage to an imaginary soul of the world. To be consistent, he must deduce his atoms from nonentity; and then his system will be a fine specimen of dogmatic infidelity, exhibiting nihilism,

[8] Hence the old system of Strato has no right to be called pantheism. He held, says Plutarch,—

Τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἕπεσθαι τῷ κατὰ τύχην· ἀρχὴν γὰρ ἐνδιδόναι τὸ αὐτόματον, εἶτα οὕτω περαίνεσθαι τῶν φυσικῶν παθῶν ἕκαστον.

"That natural causes follow after accidental (the course of nature after the reign of chance), for a spontaneous or automatous motion set the world a-going, and then every physical effect is accomplished as it must be."

But the sentence has been variously translated. Strato is thought by Cudworth to have held the hylozoic atheism.

atheism, and pantheism at one view. But such a theory is not likely to be proposed, because when scepticism thinks it has set aside theism, it is seldom disposed to speculate farther on the figment it has taken in its stead.

Universal fatalism is often regarded as essentially atheistic[9]. And this, no doubt, is true of a physical necessity, and applies therefore to all pantheistic systems which make the universe a physical evolution or manifestation of the Divine Nature. But it is here necessary to bear in mind the distinction between a physical and a moral necessity. Dr. Clarke has well observed upon this point, that "it is consistent with the most perfect liberty to understand that God is unalterably determined by the perfection of His will, to do what is best upon the whole[1]." A doctrine which regards the Divine Agency as necessarily determined by the eternal attributes of Wisdom and Goodness, and in conformity with their eternal moral law, is something very different from an evolution of physical causes. This is not to "give fate a power over Deity[2]." Whether it be choice or necessity, that a good and powerful Being does

Moral necessity.

[9] Thus Mosheim calls it "the touchstone of atheism," and says (in Cudworth, vol. i. p. 202, n. 10) that philosophers who determine that God acts necessarily, whatever they may say of His Wisdom and Power are nevertheless atheists. This appears to be pressing the matter too far.

[1] "Being and Attributes," § ix.

[2] Mosheim, ubi s.

that which is good, is nothing more than a question of words [3].

But the Divine Will may be seen to lie beyond the province of reason. The inquiry into the human will is sufficiently difficult, without our seeking to dogmatise on the will of Him who is from everlasting.

Is human necessity pantheistic?

16. It is worth consideration however, whether the doctrine of human necessity do not verge on pantheism, at least when the determining causes of the will, *whether physical or moral*, are derived by necessity from the Divine Sovereignty. To deny all originating power of the will, must be to place the primordial and necessary causes of all things in the Divine Nature. It is in effect to make the will of man a continual, though spiritual, emanation from the will of God, and so to take away the clearest evidence we have of the distinct existence of finite beings. For it is in the acts of the will that we have the most distinct consciousness of personality; and in its deeds of evil, the momentous discovery that we are not one with God.

[3] Leibnitz in his Correspondence with Clarke (Letter v.) is provoked to say, "Peut-être personne n'ait mieux expliqué et plus à fond que j'ai fait dans la Théodicée, la véritable différence, entre liberté, contingence, spontanéité, d'un côté, et nécessité absolue, hazard, coaction, de l'autre." The reader will therefore know where to continue the question. No man's testimonial to the Theodicæa could be more valuable than its author's own.

There is surely more reason to regard man as separate from his Maker in his evil agency, than in any other power of his being.

The difference of good and evil is a palpable fact of universal experience; and the first and easiest inference of the mind is what no subsequent inquiry can invalidate; that as the general order and harmony of the universe prove the unity of the Creator; so the interruptions of this harmony, the disorder and confusion, which are the scum on the surface of human life, and can be traced to their source in man's free agency, are indications of some originating power, and a certain distinctness of existence, which belong to finite and subordinate creatures.

Nor does the necessitarian appear to have any escape from a semi-pantheism, in the distinction between physical and moral necessity. It would be more consistent with the facts of life, to speak of chains of immoral necessity. It is true that on this scheme the moral distinction of good and evil may remain the same as before within the sphere of man; and consequently, as extreme necessitarians will admit, exhortations, discipline, chastisements are as necessary as before. But it destroys the distinction in its relation to God, and makes the means of improvement to be but links in the chain of necessity[4]. Of the two direct opposites one

[4] Which may as well be supposed, with the old astrologers, to

must be true: either the creature originates evil independently of necessitating cause of whatever kind; or the Creator is the author of both good and evil, and *enmity to God* are words without meaning. All religion, natural or revealed, requires the distinction of right and wrong to be valid beyond the sphere of human thought, and to determine the relation of man to God. Otherwise moral probation is illusory, punishments unjust, and the true ethics are those of Spinoza. For surely it must be one of the darkest features of pantheism, to make the Creator the originator of evil, by deducing all evil as well as good, through a succession, whether of physical causes or of mental motives, from their primordial causes in His nature. From this conclusion, an originating power of the will of created beings is the only possible escape. How far it is an escape, it will be necessary to consider hereafter, in connexion with some current theories of evil.

It may be observed however, that there is nothing repugnant to reason or religion in a pantheism of goodness (if the expression may be allowed). Indeed, it is the doctrine of Holy Scripture, that the deeds of men are acceptable to God, only when their motives originate in a Divine

depend upon the stars! Hence Origen, "Non necessitate cogimur, quod fieri arbitrantur, qui stellarum cursum et motus causam dicunt humanorum esse gestorum." (de Princ. præf. i. 5.)

Influence; and that God "all in all" will be the consummation of goodness. This Christian doctrine binds the good man to his Creator in the depth of his being, and leaves to the creature only the negative power of declining the waters of life, and so separating himself from the Fountain of all being [5].

Coexistence of finite and infinite.

17. The student of pantheism may perhaps have observed, that this philosophy is an attempt to evade the difficulty, constantly recurring in speculative inquiries, of the coexistence of finite and infinite. The mystery of change in the dominion of One Who is unchangeable, must always present itself as a perplexing question to the mind.

We have an instance of this difficulty, in the coexistence of time, and space, and things therein, with the absolute eternity and infinity of the Most High. All experience knowledge necessarily comes to man under conditions of space or time. The operation of the Almighty in creation is seen under these conditions. But no indefinite extension of space or time can ever reach His absolute infinity or eternity. There is thus something incomprehensible in His relation to His works.

[5] These observations may tend to explain the frequent indefinite use of the term pantheism. Dr. Hampden speaks of Aquinas and Bonaventura as pantheists. Dr. Pusey answers truly that their expressions are not so strong as those of Scripture. Similarly Mr. Theodore Parker makes St. John a pantheist.

BOOK I. CHAP. VI.

Hence the old questions already noticed,—Was there ever a time when He existed without His works? And why did creation begin at some particular moment rather than any other, after an elapsed eternity? For if there were once a time when the finite did not exist, we seem to want a cause of its commencement at one particular point of time and space rather than another. These questions may be shown to be unreasonable, but the mystery of the coexistence of finite and infinite remains.

Of transient causes with the Divine presence.

18. A similar difficulty occurs in many other questions. It is felt in the attempt to reconcile the transient causes of creation, with the abiding presence of the Creator. Existing rocks record the ebbing and flowing of seas, and, by impressions of rain drops, even the direction of the wind, at some epoch ages before the creation of man. Yet reason and revelation concur in the conclusion, that finite existence is in some way dependent on the Creator, at every moment of its continuance. Thus the Divine Agency appears to be both immanent and transient in creation. But in what sense can it be both? How far is it this or that? Can it be both at once in the same phænomenon? Such questions are beyond the sphere of man.

Pantheism is an attempt to evade the difficulty. Spinoza makes that which is eternal in its essence,

to be eternal in all the effects of its being. Finite things therefore cannot be immediate effects of the Divine Essence or Agency, but each one is determined, not merely in its limits, but to its existence and operation, by some previous finite cause, and this again by a former, and so on to infinity[6]. And yet it is a fundamental truth with him, that God is the immanent Cause of all things, the essential Cause of their existence. According to the scholastic expression, "*Deus est causa essendi rerum*[7]."

These passages give us another instance of lofty words signifying nothing. How are we to reconcile the two statements;—"He is the abiding Cause of all things," and "all things cause one another in an infinite chain of being"? By the doctrine that God and all things are identical. By giving the Divine Name to the infinite chain of atheism. We keep closer to the conditions of knowledge, when we confess the Most Highest to be known to us as the intelligent and beneficent Creator, and ourselves incompetent to understand Him as He is.

Of Divine sovereignty with freedom and prayer.

19. The theist finds a similar difficulty in reconciling the Divine supremacy with human freedom, and understanding how it is that the Divine pur-

[6] Eth. i. 28.

[7] Eth. i. 18; 24. Corol.; 25.

pose is fulfilled by means of human agency in individuals and in history, and even through the instrumentality of evil: and again, how, in a course of nature bound in unerring laws, there can be a special Providence Who answers prayer. It is not difficult to make out that the habit of prayer is as rational in philosophy, as it is found in practice to be effectual. But on the question of its relations to the laws of nature, we soon arrive at the limits of knowledge. The last answer will be the same as the first, and first or last it is a wise answer,—"It exceeds our limited comprehension." This was the answer that Spinoza learnt from Des Cartes[8]; and if he had been satisfied with the manifest truth, he would have spared the world the frequent trouble of misunderstanding an unintelligible system. But according to himself, nothing can exceed our understanding; there is no such thing as an incomprehensible[9]. Unable then to extend the faculties beyond the insuperable limits which nature has imposed, he is obliged to deny the existence of every thing beyond these limits. Unable to raise the mind to the infinite, he must degrade the infinite to the mind. So true it is, that his philosophy is that of those, who think they must comprehend all the mysteries of being.

[8] Cogitata metaph. i. iii. § 10.

[9] His departure from Des Cartes on this point is pointed out in Meyer's preface to the Principia Philos. Cartes.

20. In endeavouring to avoid his errors, philosophy must found itself on the facts of observation and consciousness: and of these none are more certain than that there is war in the universe; that in the world around us and in ourselves, there is a contention between good and evil. This truth is as certain as the fact that we exist at all; and supplies the evidence that though God is the Author of all things, yet all things are not God. We have the choice of believing that there is war in the Divine Nature, or war in a world of creatures. Reason cannot admit the Creator Himself to be subject to change, or chargeable with imperfection or inconsistency. It can believe in the communicated existence of inferior beings, though the act of creation be incomprehensible, and finds in their independence its solution, or partial solution, of the existence of evil.

The possibility of evil is thus the alternative of pantheism. If beings exist in any degree capable of acting with independent power, it becomes at once possible that their power may be turned against that which gives them life. It is a fearful thing to contemplate. Without question, there must be something awful in the contention of the finite with the Infinite, in the striving of man with his Maker: and in this truth we may perhaps find one solution of the remarkable prevalence of pantheism in all ages and countries. "One cannot suffi-

ciently admire," says Bayle[1], "that so extraordinary a notion, and so full of absurd contradictions, should insinuate itself into the souls of so many, so remote from each other, and so different in humours, education, customs, and genius."

The truth is, if all things be not God, if all do not exist IN Him, yet created souls are not separate from the Creator, unless their derived powers have been turned backward against their source. They are in communion with Him, unless they have chosen to be independent, and have allowed His influences to pass unheeded. This conjecture of reason is the plain and positive doctrine of revelation. Pantheism expresses the astonishment of reason to see nature separate from God. It is the speculation of the soul which ought to be one with the Eternal, but is robbed of the Divine treasure, and cannot realize her loss.

But it is vain to sigh for a speculative unity, when the moral unity is broken. It is vain to deny the mystery of change, because we cannot see how it is to be reconciled with the existence of the Unchangeable. It is vain to attempt by means of syllogisms, to represent the Creator and His universe, as one shoreless, waveless ocean, profound, equable, unbroken.

There is indeed an ocean of being, and the soul

[1] Dict., Art. Japan.

which sighs and reasons may think itself a wave upon the surface. But in one sense the comparison fails to hold. It is not at the mercy of the winds, nor wholly determined by the vast waters which support it. It has an unity and a moving power of its own. In another sense the comparison holds good. The war of elements, the confusion we see every where, belong only to the surface. The ocean is deeper than the waves. It cannot be influenced by the winds of time, nor stirred from its place by the billows which dash themselves, and foam, and are broken on the shore of human life.

"The floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves," but "the Lord on High is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

BOOK II.

THE DIRECT EVIDENCES OF NATURAL THEISM.

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTER OF THE EVIDENCES.

THE investigation of the principles involved in the most elementary knowledge of existing things, shows that man is naturally more ready in acquiring it, than in tracing it backward to its origin, or confirming its veracity to the reflective mind. This is true in the common knowledge of an outward world: we may expect it to be true in the demonstration of a First Cause of the world.

Spontaneous knowledge.

1. It may be anticipated that intelligent creatures of a Supreme Creator will be led, by some natural process in the constitution of things, to lift up their hearts in adoration, and their minds in humble acknowledgment, to the Great Being Who has called them to life. But men may be drawn to God, and engaged in His worship, though un-

able to follow to its source the influence which moves them. In whatever way they may become acquainted with the truth that there is an eternal Lord of all, they must always be subject to the sceptical question, How can you vouch for the objective validity of this apparent knowledge? What proof have you that it is more than a delusive appearance, presented to you by some deceiving spirit, or by a false application of your natural principles of judgment?

An original conviction of this truth, which should be absolutely beyond question, can scarcely be conceived as within the bounds of possibility. Suppose the demand of extreme scepticism to have been fulfilled. Suppose the great truth had been written upon the sky, or impressed by an irresistible instinct of nature upon the minds of all; suppose an overpowering influence from God Himself had compelled us to the acknowledgment that He exists, yet we should not have been quite debarred from questioning the origin of this influence; and, if we had, the inability to ask questions would not have precluded the possibility of error. The atheist himself would scarcely desire an innate compulsory belief which stifled his darling faculty of scepticism. He would not choose to resign the privilege of asking why he must believe. And yet the question *why*, in such a case, must extend within the depths of being. He could not know

why, without seeing whence and how the assurance arises in his mind; and to search the origin of an innate assurance is little less than to know why and how he exists at all.

Mathematical proofs.

2. Mathematical demonstrations have no place in questions of this kind. The mind can never gain the same kind of proof of any existence, whether of other men or of any common object of sensation, as of the properties of number or of geometry. And for manifest reasons. For in the one case, it has to deal with ideas and the relations of ideas wholly internal to itself; in the other, to pass from the internal thought to a world without. In the one case, the ideas may be perfect and self-adequate, for they have no relation to any thing beyond themselves; in the other, they are necessarily imperfect; they convey but a relative knowledge, and furnish us with but a partial and inadequate conception of the reality.

Thus in every question of numbers or of geometry we investigate relations instituted by the mind itself. Take the case of number. All questions relating to it are wholly subjective. We are able, it is true, to ask questions of objective significancy; such, for instance, as relate to the numerical diversity of the world around us, and the relations between its diversity and its unity. But such questions are foreign to the science of numbers.

This science, though ultimately founded on the perception of diversity, is wholly concerned about the relations of the mind's internal conceptions of unity and plurality. It has nothing to do with any outward signification of these ideas.

All numerical science is deduced from the construction of a numerical notation. The mind forms the notation by means of the addition of units, and the conceptions of distinct numbers thus successively formed. Thus two unities give the dual, one unity with the dual gives the triad, and so on to the limits of notation. But as soon as the notation has been constructed, every numerical operation, though it may increase our knowledge of the relations of numbers, yet only unfolds what was involved in the system itself. Thus the addition, $7 + 5 = 12$, though in one sense it may be called a synthetical [1] or ampliative judgment, that is, a judgment which increases our knowledge; yet, in another sense, it is an analytical or explicative judgment, since it unfolds what was implied in our previous conceptions, though unperceived. The equation has no meaning till we have already formed the number 12, and, in forming it, have added 7 to 5, whether we have taken notice of it or not.

Analytical and synthetical judgments.

The science of numbers is thus concerned with

[1] As it is considered by Kant, in the Introduction to the Pure Reason.

ideas of which the mind has a perfect comprehension. The same is true of geometry, which investigates the properties of figures formed in space by the mind itself. Here again we are not concerned with the objective significancy of the mind's conception of space. It is immaterial to geometrical science what space may be in itself; it is enough that the mind possesses the conception. And, as in arithmetic, the judgments are in one sense synthetical, in another analytical. They are synthetical, because knowledge is increased by the investigation of the properties of figures. The conception of a triangle, for instance, is that of a plane figure included within three straight lines which meet; and it is an addition to this conception to discover that its three angles are equal to two right angles. They are analytical, because they are implicitly contained in the definitions of the different figures, and are made evident by attention. But in both these sciences the mind is concerned with the relations of perfect ideas; and, on this account, is within the province of mathematical demonstration.

We possess the same absolute certainty in all logical or deductive reasoning. The conclusion follows strictly from the premises, and its truth is contingent upon theirs, and coextensive in validity. Here again it may be a question of words, whether the judgment in our inference is to be called ana-

lytical or synthetical. It was contained in the premises, and in one sense we may be said to have possessed it; but since we had not observed it, it may, in another sense, be considered an addition to our knowledge.

Empirical knowledge.

3. But this much is certain upon this disputed question, and this it is important to observe, that if these judgments be regarded as synthetical, it is in a very different sense from that in which judgments of experience are synthetical. Take the judgment,—*All bodies are heavy.* The conception of body cannot by any means be made to give the conception of heaviness; but this conception is derived from experience, and is added to others to amplify the compound conception of what we call body or matter. All our notions of matter are combinations of conceptions which we derive from experience, but of which we can never ascertain why they are combined in any particular instance. Gold, for example, is yellow, and very heavy, and very ductile, and has other peculiar properties of its own; but, independently of these properties discovered to us by experience, we have no knowledge of the nature of gold, from which we can infer that a certain substance must possess such and such properties. There can here be no place for any thing like mathematical demonstration. The mind cannot have a perfect idea of the nature of gold, but

must be content to combine the results of experience, and to regard them as constituting the substance itself, although they are only manifestations of its unknown nature. The assertion then that *gold exists*, can mean no more than that among the natural substances of the world, there is one distinguished from the rest by the union of certain properties, which are found invariably to go together.

Thus every affirmation of existence is manifestly out of the field of mathematical proof. It implies something which cannot, like numbers or geometrical figures, be brought within the compass of the understanding. And this is true, whether we consider the existence of the world, of oneself, of other men, or of the Supreme Being.

A priori proofs.

4. But may we not have an *a priori* demonstration of this truth? The question must be answered by another: What is an *a priori* demonstration? Strictly speaking, it is a proof that something *must* be, founded on the mind's perfect intuition of its nature, or of that on which it depends. Thus we may be said to prove *a priori* the properties of the circle; because we have a perfect conception of the figure, and discover its properties, by investigating from our construction of the circle what they must be. It is manifest that there can be no such proof of the Being of God.

We cannot, by any flight of thought, gain intuition of the Divine Nature, nor read the mysteries of His Essence. We have no intellectual faculty, whose gaze can penetrate to the brightness of the eternal Majesty. We must have been equal with God, to possess an *a priori* demonstration of His necessary existence. We are wholly incompetent to comprehend even our own existence, or that of the meanest object of the senses. However we may search the principles of knowledge, and examine the ground of certitude, there will always, in comparison of mathematical demonstration, be a bare possibility of conceiving that the wide world and its multitudes of living beings, the deep firmament and its countless lights, with all our empirical knowledge, are but the phantoms of a vision.

Kant's sense of *a priori*.

5. But there is another sense in which a proof of the Divine existence may be called *a priori;* namely, when it rests on principles, and is deduced from conceptions which have their origin in the mind, and are wholly innate. This would be a pure reason demonstration. But the reason, considered by itself, cannot go beyond the mind, and therefore gives only subjective results. Its conclusions can be no more than conceptions, not cognitions of real being. It is therefore exposed to that searching criticism, which professes to reduce the theological ideals to unavoidable illusions; unless

its witness be confirmed by principles of objective signification. But when this is the case, it may afford a valuable testimony to the truth. We shall have occasion to observe that the decisions of Kant upon this topic are unfair and improbable.

Mathematical proof not the only ground of certainty.

6. But it will be universally admitted that there are truths, to be known with no less certainty than the properties of mathematical figures, which yet are not demonstrable by mathematical processes. Such are the existence of oneself, of the world, and of other men. If we ask the atheist why he admits the existence of other men, and not of One above man, he will probably say it is because he sees them. But to see proves no existence whatever, certainly not that of intelligent and active beings. It is not the sight of his body which discovers to a man his own existence. Several facts of consciousness must be observed and combined and compared, before he can either affirm that he exists, or understand the meaning of the term. He must in like manner observe the appearances and actions which are presented to him by other men, and must compare them with his own, before he can know that they exist. This knowledge is attained in early life, whether by the natural powers of the mind, or by revelation, or by secret influence through an unseen agent connecting mind with mind, or by what-

ever means and whatever name we may designate the instruction of nature. It is by an inductive process that the mind becomes aware of the existence of others [2]. A spontaneous induction is necessary, that it may infer from the appearance or actions of a man the existence of a being like itself. The inference becomes at length a matter of association; but can never, as in geometry, give an immediate nor a perfect knowledge. Hence the demand of the atheist for a strict demonstration of theism which can defy scepticism, is answered by the question, whether he has any such demonstration of the existence of other men. It is true the Supreme Being is not visible like a man, but it is not the sight of a man that proves him to exist. Sight is a witness who delivers his testimony to the supreme human faculty of reason. Reason then may have as good evidence of the Divine existence. It may discover in its knowledge of visible things, the evidence that there must exist One superior to the visible. As it receives from sight the evidence that there is an outward world; so it may receive from the moral sense the evidence that there is a Moral Governor, and in the constitution of the mind and of the world around, may gain an indirect knowledge of His Character.

[2] Malebranche has, "Les âmes des autres hommes, il est manifest que nous ne les connaissons que par conjecture." (Recherche, Liv. iii. Part ii. c. vii. § v.

We have seen that the principle of causality is the connecting link between the subjective and the objective worlds. We shall find that the same principle, if it be trustworthy in this application, must bear us, whether we will or no, to a commencement of that world in a Cause independent of all causes. The unanimous assent of mankind shows that there is something in nature which leads to the belief in God. It has been attempted indeed to discredit the common belief, by ascribing it to "the childhood of intellect and experience." But the same objection applies to the common belief in the world, which has also been current from the infancy of the race. It has been reserved to its old age to call it in question; and this, it seems, is not the only nor in some respects the worst folly of its dotage. For the atheist who believes in the world can give no account of its unity in multiplicity; can assign no cause of its harmony in diversity. The idealist has a basis of unity, in the unity of his *ego*. If the atheist refuse to go beyond nature, it may be demanded why he goes beyond himself. Let him extend his scepticism consistently to its limits; let him regard all appearance as illusory. But if he allow the existence of an objective world, let him carry out to the full extent of its application, the principle of judgment which has guided him. He will find it to be an unavoidable conclusion from his own

admissions, that the finite must rest upon the Infinite, the temporal on the Eternal, the caused on the Uncaused, the conditioned on the Unconditioned. He will find that the world he sees demands one Cause of its existence, one Combiner of its diversity.

Limits of possible knowledge.

7. It is true that the principles of common knowledge, which lead us to a commencement of the world of finite causes and conditions, in a Being superior to these conditions, cannot go on to manifest the internal nature of the First Cause, nor any internal conditions determining the origin of the world from Him, or its manner of dependence upon Him. But this is no more than is universally true of human knowledge. That of any existing being is a knowledge, not of his internal nature, but of its outward effects or manifestations. We have an immediate perception of effects, but never more than a mediate knowledge of their causes. Even of the properties of bodies we know but a part: of their inward nature, as, for instance, of the diversities of molecular arrangement, which cause some substances chymically the same to exhibit wholly different properties; and of the secret causes on which physical properties are dependent, we are totally ignorant. What is there in the nature of things that causes gold to be so heavy and potassium so light? and why are

different metals of different colours; what is it in their nature that gives them their different relations to light? Science may find partial answers to such questions; but the answer always has the effect of only removing the difficulty one step farther from the first appearance to the inward nature of things, and there leaving it much the same as it was before. The same may be said of our knowledge of men. We perceive certain differences of conduct, which imply differences of inward character and temperament, but of the soul in itself we know nothing.

We may expect our knowledge of the Supreme Being to be subject to the same conditions. We may well be satisfied with that mediate knowledge of His Nature, which is such as we possess of the least object in the world. The knowledge of the absolute is beyond us. We can know God not as He is in Himself, not in the depths of His Essence, not in the hidden source of all being; not even in the inscrutable processes of His Wisdom, nor in the dependence of His unsearchable Judgments upon His eternal Nature. We know Him only as He is to man. We can have such partial and inadequate knowledge, as may be deduced from His dealings with mankind; His agency in creation, in providence, in redemption; His revelation of Himself in conscience, and in those special messages and interpositions, which have been authenticated

by miracles. We may easily believe that all we can know, and all that could be included within human conceptions would fall infinitely short of the fulness of Divine truth. So that a theology which should pretend to unfold the whole nature of the Infinite, and to bring it within the limits of human understanding, would stand self-confuted by the very pretension.

Our evidences then upon the important subject before us, will be found to be similar in principles, in method, in validity, to those of every existence beyond our immediate thoughts. Our knowledge must be inductive, not deductive. We cannot make intuition of the Divine Nature, and thence deduce His necessary Attributes; we must become acquainted with His Character, as with His Being; through the manifestations of it in His works. Nature advances from causes to effects; knowledge goes backward from effects to causes. But we are so constituted by the Creator, that our knowledge of Him, as we might expect, is as spontaneous and universal as that of ourselves.

Province of reason.

8. But the question will arise:—How can any principles by which we have cognition of the world or of ourselves as objects of experience, be extended to the cognition of the Supreme Being, whom we conceive to be transcendent to all experience? Reason with its irrefragable principles,

whatever they may be, may inform man of things seen and felt, but how can it rise above them to God? Must it not obviously be incompetent for the problem? If nature be the field of intelligence, what faculty can transcend nature? Must we not want another intelligence, to pass from nature up to nature's God?

A general answer to the question may be given in the first instance.

(1.) If the nature which is known be the only existent being, one would expect that the faculties of knowledge which it has developed, must be able to find in nature the answer to all possible questions, the satisfaction of all possible inquisitiveness. That which has given us the power of asking questions, must contain within itself, one would conjecture, the means of furnishing us with an answer. But if, in every faculty which can attain knowledge, and in every object which can be known, there be something that directs the mind to existence beyond what can be known; there is then ground for expecting, that both outward nature as it is presented to the mind, and inward nature as expressed in the faculties, rest in a Being greater than the nature which is known, and derive from Him their existence and their powers.

(2.) Let it be granted that nature, as manifested in the soul and in the world, is the province

of reason. Yet in itself it is unknown. Reason is obliged to regard it as the manifestation of occult causes, and is compelled, as we have seen, to make its choice between one and many incomprehensibles. It demands an unknown substratum of the visible, and an unknown essence of the intelligent; and may thus be led to an unknown Cause of both, wherein to find the cause and explanation of their marvellous relationship.

(3.) Reason may apply itself reflectively, and may see that the conditions of its knowledge of nature direct it to a Being above nature. It may perceive that the very principles which discover the existence of its subject or object, are outraged by the denial of a Being superior to them both. If these principles be incompetent to bear the intelligence to God, yet they may manifest their own insufficiency. They may fall into inconsistency with themselves, when it is attempted to confine the reason within the limits of its world-knowledge, and may not be found to be self-consistent, till they rest on the admission of a Being superior to nature.

Thus far, as a general answer to the question of the province of reason. The whole result of our inquiry should be no other than that, of all the truths which can be known, the existence of the Supreme Being rests on evidences the most extensive, multifarious, and irresistible. Nature is the

hieroglyphic of God. Every part of nature, within and without the mind, furnishes a new key to its meaning. It may be interpreted by various methods, but its meaning is always found to be the same: "There is a Being, All Powerful, Wise, and Good, by Whom every thing exists."

Philosophy has given true results.

9. And this has been the conclusion, not only of the common sense of men, but of the wisest and best philosophers. From those who would confine the reason, and quell the noblest aspirations of the soul, we hear much of the vagaries of philosophy, and of recurring systems of error, with their vain strivings after hidden knowledge, which have successively risen up and been set aside. We hear in modern times of Locke, pious and sincere in religion, earnest and intelligent in the investigation of truth, but with a system essentially sceptical, which had its legitimate development at home in the idealism of Berkeley, and the scepticism of Hume, and its just representation abroad in the specious superficialness of Condillac. We hear of Berkeley as unsurpassed for acuteness and for elegance of style, and the possessor of

"Every virtue under heaven,"

but still farther inclined down the fearful steep of scepticism.

This account we have already seen to be but partial, even as regards that department of philo-

sophy which investigates the *origin* of knowledge. But our subject leads us to judge by a different standard. It requires us to estimate a philosophical system by the effect of its principles in their application to the common and acknowledged cognitions of mankind. From this point of view, it may be a matter of comparatively slight importance, whether a writer may have held a theory of presentative or representative perception of the world. But it is of the greatest consequence whether or no he held the principle of objective causation, and applied it to establish the truths of common judgment, that there is a world, a human soul, and a Creator. From this point of view, it must appear that Locke and Berkeley are constantly misrepresented, when they are connected with the scepticism of Hume.

Both these philosophers maintained that the mind effects the passage from subjective to objective by its principle of causality. Locke, for instance, distinctly enunciates that it is by this means we become acquainted with the existence of the world [8]; and maintains the sufficiency of this mediate knowledge for all the purposes of life. He employs the same principle to establish our knowledge of the existence of God, on that of our

[8] Bk. iv. c. xi. Mr. Rogers, in the article already referred to, points out that Locke, in his controversy with Stillingfleet, enunciates causality as "a true principle of reason."

own existence; and his arguments on this subject deserve a short notice. (Essay, Book iv. chap. x.)

Locke's argument for the Being of God.

10. In § 2 he argues, that "Man knows that he exists, and that he is something;" an assumption which the reader may be apt to think, might still be made without apology or explanation.

§ 3. "In the next place he has an intuitive certainty that bare nothing cannot produce any real being." Therefore, "from eternity there has been something."

§ 4. "Next it is evident that what had its being and beginning from another, must also have all that which is in and belongs to its being from another too. All the powers it has must be owing to, and received from, the same source. This Eternal Source, then, of all being must be the Most Powerful."

§ 5. He goes on similarly to show, by another application of the causal principle, that the Source of being must be intelligent. If there had been a time, he argues, when the Eternal Being was void of understanding, then "it was impossible there should ever have been any knowledge." Consequently a Being Most Powerful and Intelligent must have existed eternally; that is, there is a God.

This conclusion is confirmed (§§ 9, 10) by the argument that man can know or conceive but

"two sorts of beings, cogitative and incogitative." "But it is as impossible to conceive that ever bare incogitative matter should produce a thinking intelligent being, as that nothing should of itself produce matter."

This demonstration, it is evident, rests wholly on the principle of causality objectively applied.

Berkeley's theism.

11. It would be no less easy to show, that notwithstanding his denial of the existence of matter independently of the mind, yet the same principle is employed by Berkeley, as it is by all mankind, consciously or unconsciously, in effecting the passage from the subjective to the objective. And there is an objective world in Berkeley's system, as well as in any other, only that world is here the Supreme Being Himself. We hear much of Berkeley's doctrine of the existence of matter, but very little of his doctrine of the Supreme Being. And yet his "Minute Philosopher" contains principles and arguments which exactly meet the scepticism of the present day, and are not easily met or refuted[4].

Common judgment of Locke and Berkeley.

12. We have reason to enter a protest against the sentence which condemns Locke and Berkeley, as unwilling accomplices in the scepticism supposed to be deduced from their principles by Hume.

[4] See especially Dial. iv.

It is easy to criticise men when they are dead, and to lead the custom of judging them partially and from one particular point of view. But it may be imagined that both these philosophers, if they were to rise to life, would be mightily surprised to find in what company their labours had been classed by posterity.

"What!" they might exclaim, "are we charged with a theory which denies all objective significancy to the notion of cause or power, when it was through this very door that we found the passage from ideas to things?"

"But then," it might be replied to Locke, "your representation theory, which made the mind directly cognizant of nothing beyond its own ideas, led the way to scepticism."

"Representation!" might be the rejoinder; "yet, after all, the picture of nature which is visible to sight, is confessed by every school to be something different from nature in its reality. The question, then, between mediate and immediate perception, between presentative and representative knowledge, can be but secondary, unless in the immediate perception you gain a knowledge of the actually existing thing, and not mere relative knowledge or phænomenon. After so many years of thought, what have you gained at the best but a theory of relative cognition? and does this give you any deeper insight into real existence?"

"But then you derived all knowledge from experience, and with it even the notion of causality, and this was sure to lead to scepticism."

To this also he would have an answer. "He admitted, however, that man had faculties fit to attain knowledge, and did not derive *them* from experience. It was only the reflective knowledge of the causal principle, that he pretended to deduce from this source; he never doubted its possession by the mind among its original faculties. This possession was not a matter of knowledge but of nature, and it did not fall within his purpose to inquire into it. But he plainly allowed it to be unquestionable, and assumed and employed it, in his inquiries into our knowledge of the world and of God."

Suppose, then, our modern philosopher to turn next to the ghost of the bishop. "You, however, even denied the existence of matter, and it was an easy step from this to deny the existence of spirits."

"But what reality had he denied? None but that of an unknown substratum of qualities, which you admit possesses no originating causality of its own, and seldom regard even in the light of a secondary cause. At the best, you can but know it by its properties, and are obliged to regard these as communicated powers; yet you cannot tell whether they are derived from the bygone act of a finished creation, or are the manifestations of a

continued agency. So that, after all, it is only an unknown incomprehensible *something*, of which you are uncertain whether it can be said to possess power, that you think it necessary to place between God and the soul. It was my doctrine," he might add, "that the existence of matter consists in a Divine operation. Your modern philosophy assigns it an existence of its own, but whether independent or dependent in its present nature, pretends not to determine; and must confess, in either case, that it rests ultimately in the Divine operation. If, then, matter in itself be unknown, it may be the immediate agency of the Creator on any theory of perception. Even the strictest doctrine of immediate perception, may be immediate perception of that Divine agency.

But one truth is certain. We are immediately cognizant of an action and reaction of internal and external power. This, the very truth which Hume's scepticism had sought to undermine, *he* had strenuously maintained, and had applied to establish our knowledge of the soul and of God, on a basis at least as firm as that on which other philosophers have founded their knowledge of the soul and the world."

By such arguments, and for such reasons, both Locke and Berkeley might justly claim to dissolve all connexion with scepticism. They would stand apart both from Hume's scepticism and from

Kant's; from Hume's, which subverted all philosophy by its denial of causation; from Kant's, which subverted all objective philosophy by making causality to be subjective. They might well wonder to see that Britain had, in so many years, added so little to their labours; and that Germany, with all its intellectual activity, and in its recoil from their supposed scepticism, had devised an atheistical idealism [5] in place of the theistical idealism of Berkeley; and had then advanced, in the school of Hegel, to a scepticism more dogmatical than Hume's. They might read in these melancholy results, the sure consequences of every attempt to establish a philosophy, without laying the notion of cause or power in its objective validity at the foundation. They might in this respect lay claim to the honours of common sense for their agreement with the universal judgment of mankind.

[5] The egoistical idealism is strictly atheistical. But no opinion is given of Fichte.

CHAPTER II.

ON SPACE AND TIME.

What is space?

1. In proceeding to inquire farther respecting the limits of knowledge, and to establish our knowledge of God on the unavoidable cognition of our own being, a primary question which demands a short attention is that of the objective reality of space. For it is evident that the only known properties which are inseparable from matter, are those which depend on its relations to space. Other properties distinguish one kind of material substance from another, but do not belong to all matter. A doctrine of the real existence of matter must therefore depend on the reality of space. And this will be true, even though the essential reality of matter lie beneath its secondary, rather than its primary qualities; and these last be considered as relational, rather than essential.

In connexion with this question, we might take the cognate one of time. But our remarks will

BOOK II. CHAP. II.

apply, for the most part, to both space and time.

What are space and time? We must have ascertained the limits of knowledge upon this question, before we can advance a single step in philosophy. It is a question of considerable importance in the evidences of the existence of God. It is also interesting from its application in the celebrated argument of Dr. Clarke; and derives still further importance from its relation to our conceptions of the Divine Attributes of Omnipresence and Eternity.

What are space and time? It is the easiest of all questions to answer, yet of all questions the most difficult. It seems as though the first and simplest, the most inevitable and universal conceptions of the mind, are exactly those which are most difficult of investigation. In fact the notions which arise first into the mind's possession, are those which lie at the greatest distance from the present consciousness. The simpler they are, the earlier in general they arise; and the earlier they arise, the farther the mind has to go back in tracing their origin and examining their meaning.

The condition of phænomena.

2. This much is certain, that the mind cannot form to itself the conception, *that there is no space*[1].

[1] "Man kann sich niemals eine Vorstellung davon machen dass kein Raum sey." (Kant, ubi s. p. 35.)

It may easily conceive the non-existence of matter; but empty space remains in its infinity, though all matter were annihilated. It is therefore, as Kant infers, a condition of the possibility of phænomena.

But here the difficult question arises: Is it a condition internal or external to the mind? Is it a subjective condition of the mind's capability of perceiving, or an objective condition by which something external is adapted to the mind's faculty of perception? Kant adopts the former alternative. He makes space to be a pure intuition, the form given by the innate sensibility of the mind to the unknown matter of the outward world. And he professes to prove that it is *nothing more than* a pure intuition, or subjective property which cleaves to the mind, and is the condition of its sensibility. He regards it as real in its relation to the sensibility, but independently of this—with reference to things as they are in themselves, it has only an ideal existence. He admits it to be possible, however, though not certain, that all finite thinking beings must necessarily coincide with man in this form of sensibility.

If this be true, it is easy to see what becomes of the theological argument from infinite space. No knowledge of objective existence can be founded on a subjective condition of sensibility. On such a basis we can establish nothing more than an

ideal, and that not an ideal of the reason, but an ideal, if we may so speak, of the pure intuition.

Not merely subjective.

3. But the foregoing principles will lead to a somewhat different conclusion upon space. Every distinct perception must have its own cause external to the mind. Each single object has its own proper nature, and contains within itself the causes of its action on the sensibility. But external objects, and parts of the same object, are perceived as separate from one another, and the separation is wholly independent of the mind. Hence whether the primary qualities of body—those which depend on its space relations—be regarded as essential in the deep nature of things, or only relational, still it is evident that we may conceive each part of matter to have its own causes of sensation, either statically underlying or dynamically generating its separate phænomena in different parts of space.

Space then is necessary not only as the internal form of the intuition, and the condition of our ability to perceive; but also as the external condition of the presentation of objects to the mind.

We might seem, at first sight, to find an escape from this assertion, in regarding all phænomena as the effects of one immediate cause; or, in other words, as all produced immediately on the mind by One Real Being, Himself superior to all relations

of space. But, even on this hypothesis, the One Cause must contain in Himself the cause or causes of the diversity and separateness of phænomena. There must, in some sense, be a separation in this diversity anterior to its appearance to the mind, and the cause of it. So that, in this case, space must be a determination, if not of the real existence, at least of the operation of that Cause of causes, and as such necessarily external to the mind.

But if the immediate causes on which all phænomena depend be not essentially one, each object of perception must then have, external to the mind, its causes combining to the formation of a distinct object, in some one of an infinite number of parts of objective space. Space is therefore something real, without reference to the mind, which separates the different objects from one another.

It appears then that whether matter be independent in existence, and contain all reality in itself; or it be dependent immediately or mediately upon the Supreme Being; there is a certain separation, one from another, of these phænomena by which it is known to the mind,—a separation which is as certainly independent of the mind, as the existence of matter itself. Hence it follows that space is something external, as well as internal to the subjective nature of the mind.

The mind, in short, is known as the subject of sensibility; matter as its object: the perception is inseparable from conditions of space, and therefore we ought to regard these conditions as inherent both in the mind and in the object; and have as good reason to attribute them to the one as to the other.

Whence its universality and necessity?

4. But how shall we account for the *universality and necessity* of our conception of space? To explain this, it is necessary to distinguish between the form of the intuition, and the reflective conception of space. The former is a latent condition of perception, which may either be native to the mind, or may be imparted to it in primary experience. Perception in space may be a necessary consequence of unknown relations in existence, which may impart to the intuition its inalienable form. But the reflective conception of space is evolved in common experience. This however has also the characteristics of universality and necessity. We cannot form the notion of no-space. How then can the universal conception have been derived from experience?

In this way. Experience, it is true, can never give us universal and necessary notions of things external to the mind. It can only discover that things are constituted in a certain manner, not that they *must* be so universally and necessarily.

Yet it may bring to the reflective consciousness the mind's native principles of knowledge, which may at once be apprehended as of universal application. The absoluteness which attaches to the notion,—the necessity we are under of regarding infinite space as embracing all finite spaces, and not these as composing it,—could not indeed arise from experience commonly so called; but may very well be a result of experience discovering to us our native faculties, or those principles of knowledge which had their origin in primary experience. In short, the *a priori* intuition of space is the foundation of the *a posteriori* conception, and enters into it.

What is it in itself?

5. One more question remains. We have considered the relations of space to the mind as perceiving subject; to the world as object perceived. But what is space in itself? What are its relations to mind and matter, in their fundamental reality? What to the Supreme Being?

It is easy to ask the questions. Their answers must be left to those who can follow back the fountain of life to its Source. On the last question, however, it may be remarked, that reason, as we shall see, requires for its basis of knowledge a Being superior to all relations of space and time. It agrees in this respect with the popular conception of the Infinite Being. We are accustomed

to consider our knowledge of Him, as removed from the common notions of extension and duration. We think of Him as every where present, yet not extended; as eternal, yet not enduring.

But the question—what is space in itself?—still remains where it was. Is it mere nonentity, neither God nor a creature, as Dr. Watts supposes [2]? or something merely relative,—an order of coexistences, as time is an order of succession; according to the opinion of the illustrious Leibnitz [3]? or is it, according to his peer and contemporary Sir Isaac Newton [4], a determination of the Divine Attribute of Infinity? or the very Attribute itself, as Clarke sometimes appears to think [5]? or is it, we might add, an arbitrary creation, the tablet on which God has been pleased to draw the picture of the universe [6]?

They who are able, may answer the questions; and when they have answered them, they will be able to estimate the force of a theistic argument, founded on the idea of infinite space.

[2] Phil. Essays.

[3] Correspondence with Clarke, Letter iii. art. 4, &c.

[4] "Adest semper et durat ubique, et existendo spatium et tempus constituit." (Schol. gen.) This appears to be the opinion of Malebranche. (Entret. viii. 4.)

[5] On the Being and Attributes, iii.

[6] This appears to be Bayle's notion. Dict., art. Zabarella.

CHAPTER III.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL AND OF THE WORLD.

1. In examining the theories of existence, no signs of life were to be discovered in the abortions of materialism. We must look in another direction to prosecute the inquiry concerning the Source of being.

For this purpose some further observations are necessary on the character of our knowledge of the world and of the soul, and of their distinction from one another as different orders of beings.

It has been already seen that every perception contains two distinct elements,—one having its origin in the mind itself, the other in the world without. It may be conjectured that these elements are totally inseparable. But our subject does not demand any minute examination of this difficult question.

It is enough for our purpose to have observed that all immediate knowledge, whether of mind or

matter, is of appearances; but that we are able, and indeed are under the necessity of referring every phænomenon to its unknown cause. We have therefore an indirect knowledge of the reality of things. We are able to affirm that it exists; and, farther, that it contains a diversity corresponding to the diversity of phænomena. Sometimes, as in the sight of objects, the mind can trace a causal process of several steps between the distant object and the consciousness; but it always reaches, after one or a few steps, to the limits of what can be known. It can then advance no farther than to affirm,—that the unknown contains the cause of every phænomenon of the known; and that the various causes existing in the unknown are to be estimated by their first results in the cognition.

SECTION I.

PSYCHOLOGY: OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL.

Foundation of this knowledge.

2. These observations apply then to the mind's knowledge of itself as an existing soul. It has no immediate apperception of itself as an objective being, but is under the natural necessity of referring the phænomena of thought, will, affection, to a real cause, and is thus led to know itself as a real being.

Thus, through the causal principle of the reason, the subjective consciousness furnishes decisive proof of some objective existence. The same primary

experience, which delivers to the mind the phænomena of self-consciousness, teaches it to refer them to an existing soul, and to acknowledge its existence to be something which is manifested by thought, but does not consist in thought; something, on the contrary, which is prior to thought and the cause of it.

Rational psychology.

3. The common conclusions upon the nature of the soul are three: (1) The soul is *substance;* (2) it is *simple* substance; (3) it is *identical* in different times. These conclusions are criticised by Kant, whose examination of the mind's pretensions to a scientific knowledge of the soul, the world, and the Supreme Being, forms the most interesting portion of the celebrated Critique. "This substance," he says, "furnishes the conception of *immateriality;* as simple substance, of *incorruptibility;* its identity as intellectual substance gives *personality;* these three articles together give *spirituality*[1]." It must be noticed that the soul, as substance, is regarded as the subject of those faculties by which it is known as different from matter.

The soul as substance.

4. The preceding conclusions are regarded by the great philosophical critic as paralogisms. And

[1] Rein. V. p. 278. Trans. Dial. B. ii. c. i.

justly so, when they pretend to unfold the essential nature of the soul. The knowledge of myself, as the subject of thought, cannot discover that myself, "as object, am a being or substance independently existing[2]." No fact of consciousness can make known any ultimate cause or manner of existence as lying within the objective self. But it is taking away the foundation of all knowledge, to say that the objective self is "a mere empty representation, of which we cannot even affirm that it is a conception, but only a bare consciousness which accompanies all conceptions[3]." The objective self—the soul, in plain terms—is something more than a conception; it is known as a real power; known, not indeed in itself, but as the proximate cause of the subjective thought, the possessor of certain faculties, the author of certain effects, and existing prior to these effects.

This knowledge of the soul is independent of any theory of existence, and differs from that of Kant, in the application of the causal principle, to carry us from subjective appearance to objective being. It admits, however, that this being can be but indirectly known and inadequately described; but affirms with certainty that it is a power which, by action and reaction with the world, gives rise to the results presented in the mind.

[2] "Ein für mich selbst bestehendes Wesen oder Substanz sey." Ib. p. 788.

[3] Ib. p. 278.

Matter also, as well as mind, may be said to be known as substance. The two are distinguished in all knowledge by their properties. The one is intellectual, the other physical substance; the one acts with choice, the other is inert. The mental faculties have already engaged our attention at some length. The important question of the mind's originating power will be considered in Section III.

As simple substance.

5. It is through the same principle of causality that we gain all the knowledge we can have of the soul as simple substance. The feeling of the unity of self, which attaches to the mental history of every man, must be referred for its cause to some internal property of the soul. Beyond the fact that you are compelled in every mental action to regard yourself as one being;—one, to whom information is brought in every perception, who commands in every act of will, who decides in every judgment;—beyond this feeling of the unity of self, you cannot help searching for a cause of it; and this cause must be considered to lie, where you are wont to place it, in the unknown nature of the soul.

As identical in different times.

6. We must, in like manner, have a cause in the soul of the natural feeling of our continued identity. Every perception affirms the existence

of mind and object, and that not at a single point of time, but continued for a definite period. This is manifest. No perception can be instantaneous; the mind and object must continue during the perception without apparent change, or experience is impossible. The knowledge of continuance of existence is thus a result of our primary experience [4]. But in this case, as in the two former, we advance only the single step, to which causality leads us, from the inward consciousness to the objective field beyond.

The soul, then, can be known to exist as objective substance, and to contain in itself the cause of its conscious unity and identity. But the nature of its existence, the reality of its unity and identity are unknown.

Locke's account of personal identity.

7. Hence we may understand the meaning of those who hold with Locke, that personal identity consists in consciousness. Strictly speaking it can consist only in the unknown nature of the soul; but in our ignorance of its nature we are obliged to connect its identity with one of its subjective results or manifestations. It will be difficult to find one more convenient than consciousness. It

[4] Hence the origin of our confidence in the veracity of memory. Every single perception is a proof of its truthfulness. The difference between the mind's retention of impressions during the time necessary to perception, and its continued remembrance of the past, is only a difference of degree.

need not be incessant and uninterrupted; it is enough that it can be renewed from time to time by the memory. If it be demanded whether we are to infer that a man's personal identity is lost, if he lose his continuity of consciousness, as in insanity; it is enough for all practical purposes to answer, that whether it have ceased or not, he has for the present lost all knowledge of it, and therefore it is as good as lost to him.

Incorruptibility not deducible.

8. From such knowledge of the soul as simple substance, it is plainly impossible to draw any proof of incorruptibility or immortality. The common argument to this effect[5] would go to show that the soul is uncreate as well as immortal; because, if created, whatever be the process of creation, and whatever the soul's nature, it may cease to exist, as far as we can know, by the reversal of the process. According to Kant there is a twofold error in the argument; first, in the inference that unity of consciousness implies simplicity of substance; secondly, in the supposition that, if it do, the substance must necessarily be permanent. For though it do not contain diversity nor multiplicity of parts, still it must possess *intensity of being*, or a certain *degree of reality*, in respect of that which

[5] Given, for instance, in Bishop Butler's Analogy.

constitutes existence. The substance of the soul may therefore be conceived to pass into nonentity, if not by division and corruption, yet by the gradual fading away of its essential powers.

Unaided reason has therefore no direct proof of the immortality of the soul. It can neither affirm that its immortality must be dependent on permanence of the same spiritual substance—any more than bodily identity depends on permanence of material substance; nor can it furnish any proof of the future continuance of consciousness. For any thing man can discover in himself, there may be causes within or without him which must terminate his existence, or subject him to transformation, or transmigration. But we have the strongest indirect evidence of immortality in the soul's capacity for a higher and better life, in its moral nature, in its desire of immortality. There are manifested in nature innumerable instances of wise Design, and a wondrous adaptation of all things to their ends. And the relation between the soul and the world discovers them to be the works of One Creator. Thus the wise Power which has wrought in the world, gives the soul assurances of immortality in itself.

SECTION II.

COSMOLOGY: OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATERIAL WORLD.

Properties of matter.

9. Matter, as well as mind, is known only by its phænomena. It is indirectly known as substance, that is, as a system or systems of occult causes of phænomena. But the various properties under which it is apprehended may be seen to be no more than certain relations among its different substances, or relations under which it is presented to the mind. Thus in the perception of a distant coloured surface, the colour appears to be a property of matter, and is so regarded. And yet it is evidently not in the body, as it is perceived by the mind. The mental apperception is separated from its outward occasion by a causal process of several steps. The mind is immediately cognizant of a certain affection of the brain or optic nerve, which is produced by an image of the coloured object on the expanded nerve or retina of the eye. And this image is formed by rays of light, which pass from the object to the eye. In the object itself, colour can be no more than a certain form or property of the surface, which causes it to separate particular rays from the spectrum of light, and disperse them in greater abundance, while it absorbs the rest. Yet, when the mind has learnt how it gains the perception, it still sees the colour as something in the external object. This is not a

matter of choice, but a necessity of nature; and consequently the name of colour is attached, not to any real thing, but to an appearance.

Relations to space.

Nor do we gain any knowledge of matter in its essential nature from the qualities which depend on its relations to space,—shape, extension, divisibility. For, in the first place, it has already appeared that we have no more than a relative knowledge of space itself. And, secondly, though we should conceive the mind to have an adequate and perfect intuition of the reality of space, still matter is not space, but something presented to us in space. The space retains its extension and divisibility, though the matter be removed. The shape is no longer marked out, but potentially it is still there. It is true that extension must be considered a characteristic property of matter. But it can be no more than a relation of its occult causes. It implies a multiplication of the same substance, and therefore of the causes, whatever they be, in which lies the existence of the substance. But the essential nature of matter is the same in its parts as in the whole, and is therefore independent of form or magnitude. It is possible certainly that matter may consist of minute yet extended atoms, possessing their unchangeable, and perhaps various forms. But matter is not *known* as a system of atoms. In fact extension bears the same relation to the existence of matter,

as it is known, which duration bears to that of either mind or matter. Neither of them can exist, except as enduring; matter cannot exist, except as extended; but the question remains beyond,—What is it that exists?

Physical properties.

If we turn then to the other properties, mechanical, molecular, chymical; its attraction; its cohesion and elasticity; its simple constituents, and atomic proportions; its relations to heat, light, electricity; we still find that all knowledge is of phænomena. Science has already discovered the nature of matter, no less than that of light, to be such that even to a human mind perceiving by senses far more acute, the world would be no longer what it is to man, but a wondrous dance of atoms,—a vast machine of an infinite number of discrete particles, each one moved by its own and other forces, and obeying natural laws; and the whole permeated, and perhaps combined, by fluids as subtile as that of light.

It is in these directions that physical science has been so much extended, and is destined to be extended much farther. It is more than probable that its researches will at length resolve the whole material world into a few distinct elements and simple laws. Its course is to descend from law to law, and from cause to cause: but will it ever have sounded the nature of things in any direction, and be able to say—this is no longer phænomenon, but

real, and primitive, and uncaused being? Till it can do this we must be content to acknowledge that matter is known only as phænomenon; that its reality, in the direction of all its qualities,—its whole nature is unknown [6].

We have already seen the importance of this observation in the arguments of theism. It furnishes an answer to the atheist, when he demands as the condition of his belief in God, a knowledge of Him, which, it is evident, *he does not and cannot possess, even of the world in which he lives.*

Rational cosmology.

10. Thus we see that, however little we may know of the real nature of either mind or matter, we are warranted in ascribing to each of them its own existence, if not as independent, at least as distinct from one another beyond the field of consciousness. Whatever be our theory of existence, the principles of all knowledge compel us to regard them as separate from one another, on that mar-

[6] Origen has (De Princ. iv. 34) "Intellectu solo discernitur hoc quod subjacet corporibus." Whence it was argued, even then, that matter is nothing but qualities, and the *substratum*, as it is called, a mere abstract notion. This confusion is still common; and will continue unless the distinction be drawn, not between sensible qualities and an intelligible substratum; but between matter in its relation to the senses, which is a subjective conception, and matter, *with all its qualities*, as it exists objectively, and contains the causes of the conception. The former distinction reduces matter to a nonentity.

gin of the hidden field of being, which borders immediately on the phænomenal world. They are distinct, at least as immediate preceding causes of the facts of consciousness.

Precisely as in the preceding section, we might arrange our knowledge of matter under the three conceptions; (1) Matter is *substance:* (2) It is not simple, but *multiplied:* (3) It is *diverse*, and corruptible.

Matter then is distinguished from mind, (1) by the total difference in all knowledge between physical and intellectual properties; (2) by its multiplied existence in space, which makes it extended and divisible;—a notion inapplicable to the mind, which may therefore be said to be indivisible; (3) by its diversity of kinds, each possessing its peculiar physical properties. It has been called above "a genus of beings." Hence it is capable of composition and corruption, and rarely occurs in nature in a simple state. In mind, on the contrary, the different faculties are the same in all men, though they may possess different degrees of intensity; and the notion of composition is inapplicable.

Freewill and inertia.

11. But the most important ground of distinction remains to be considered. Mind is known as possessed of will or self-activity; matter by its inertia or causal dependence. This distinction is

unquestionable, whatever question may be raised respecting its nature. The most rigid necessitarian will admit that the power of choice, or the power of originating motion in matter, is a faculty of mind which, at least as far as consciousness can extend, appears to be different from any mere physical property. Matter is known as that which never originates change or motion, but is changed or moved by every external agency, and retains or transmits the impressed force. It is a dead, insentient cause, or system of causes, affecting the sensibility, transmitting forces and actions, but always forces which are communicated to it, and are bound in fixed laws of nature. Mind, to the limits of knowledge, is distinguished from matter by its will. It is a living, intelligent cause. And it deserves notice that a leading characteristic of matter is, in effect, a negative quality. Inertia is the negation of self-activity, the chief characteristic of mind.

It has lately been attempted by M. Comte and other writers, to obscure this distinction between mind and matter, by stating that all matter is active, because all its particles are perpetually in motion. But the word active here conceals an ambiguity. It can hardly be pretended that the particles choose for themselves, whether they shall move up or down, to the right or left; any more than the earth can choose whether it will re-

volve from west to east, or from east to west. The molecular movements of matter no more disprove its inertia than the astronomical.

But the question ultimately reduces itself to that of the nature of the mind as an active power. Of the material universe it will be admitted to be true, that if, at any instant, it should regain all the exact conditions of existence which belonged to it at some former epoch, its whole series of states and changes would recur, and would go on eternally in a recurring period, or till changed by some action external to itself.

But can we make the same assertion of the universe of mind? The question cannot be answered without considering more closely the origin of mental activity. Is consciousness trustworthy or illusory, when the mind regards itself as possessed of an originating power?

The importance of the question, and its immediate bearing upon our subject will be admitted. The frequent, and often unwarrantable dogmatism of fatalists, may be an excuse for adding to discussions which may appear interminable. But these discussions have not been fruitless nor unprogressive.

SECTION III.

OF THE MIND AS AN ORIGINAL POWER.

Fatalism favours atheism.

12. No question has been more frequently considered, few have been subject to greater mistakes,

or been so often argued superficially; and perhaps none, even to this day, is more commonly involved in error and obscurity, yet at the same time decided with all the confidence of dogmatic assertion, than the question of Freewill. Jonathan Edwards and other necessitarians were long the received guides with many who were interested in such subjects, and there are not a few writers, who still venture to assume it as a self-evident or established truth, that the assertor of liberty must be a bad logician.

Such an assumption is either that of the atheist, or of one who is the dupe of his fallacies. Once regard it as certain, that there *can* be no such thing as an absolute origination of the series of phænomena;—once admit that all things are bound in the chains of necessity, and you take away all possibility of admitting the existence of a First Cause. Or if your chains of causes be considered to rest in the *moral necessity* of the Divine nature, you have then what is equivalent to a pantheism. Whether as a matter of fact an originating power reside *in man*, may be a matter of inquiry: but to maintain it to be an impossibility, is to deny the possibility of creation.

It is not surprising that the acute atheist is always a necessitarian. The question of spiritualism or materialism sinks into insignificance, and may become a mere matter of words, beside

that of liberty and necessity. "The presence of law in mind," says a living atheist, "is to me the greatest fact in theology. To the theist it is the symbol of atheism and moral anarchy, while to me freewill seems the synonym of chaos in nature, of disorder in ethics, of confusion in life."

Is it not a fact, however, that there is disorder and confusion in life? And must it not follow that freewill is needed as its explanation? Doubtless an originating will in finite beings must lead to casualism. It should therefore be the aim of religion to introduce law to mind, to bring mind under the dominion of Divine law,—from the disorder of ethics and the confusion of life to the moral necessity of life in God.

Mind free from physical necessity.

13. But let us examine some points of the question. And first with reference to phænomena. All will admit that there are certain mental facts which give us the idea implied in the term Will; and that we have an instinctive feeling of possessing an activity of our own. We have, at least, a certain appearance of freedom. It is implied in these facts that if we be not absolutely free, we are not however bound in a necessity of the same kind as that which governs the material world. We are not the slaves of any physical necessity.

In the material world, there is always a certain uniformity and regularity of phænomena, which

shows that each effect is produced by an adequate cause. Thus, if one billiard ball strike another, the second begins to move, but it is the motion of the first which is communicated. If a stone fall to the ground motion is originated, but the force was acting previously to the fall, and produced the weight of the body, according to a universal property of matter. The movements of the winds have their causes in the previous motions of the earth, and in the forces of attraction and expansion which act upon the air. The motions of the universe, the precession of the equinoxes, the planetary inequalities, afford striking examples of the permanence of material laws. There is the same uniformity and undeviating connexion of cause and effect in all chymical actions. Matter, in short, may exhibit phænomena of incipient motion or action, but never of incipient properties or powers. Its various properties may be discovered under different circumstances, but exist in their causal potency in the matter itself, and are inseparable from it.

But the actions of man are, at all events, not bound in any necessity of this kind. Suppose one, for instance, to toss up a shilling with the resolve that he will be determined by its fall whether he shall walk to the right or left. And *suppose* it granted that an infinite chain of necessity has predetermined the force and direction of the fillip,

the state of the air, the nature of the ground, and all the circumstances of motion. It is evident that the fall of the coin, though dependent upon conditions out of the man's calculation, is the necessary result of a course of fatalism.

But this chain of physical causes cannot be said to determine the man's movement. There is no communication between the fall of the shilling and the fluids which move his muscles; and yet his movement to the right or left is decided by its fall. There is, therefore, some determining power in himself, acting through his thoughts at least, if not altogether originating in them, by which his movement is regulated to correspond with an outward occasion having no physical connexion with it.

The will determined by motives.

14. But it is often argued that the will is not free, because it is determined by motives, and by the stronger of conflicting motives rather than the weaker. The first part of this objection is true: the will is determined by motives. The second part is ambiguous; for how are we to know the stronger motive, except by its prevailing against the other? To say the will is moved by the stronger motive, is to state a truism which can convey no information. The question is, Does the mind possess an original power of giving strength to one motive rather than to another?

Can it choose between two motives which shall be the stronger, and make it to be the stronger; or are all its motives influential, independently of any originating power of its own?

It is not necessary to answer this question before we can regard ourselves as possessed of a peculiar faculty which belongs to us as men, and is called Will. It is enough for this purpose to know that we are influenced by motives, of which the lower animals and dead matter are incapable. Matter is subject to forces, but not to motives. Dumb animals have their desires and instincts, which correspond to the appetites of man, and are not motives but sensational impulses. Man alone is influenced by motives which spring from an æsthetic, intellectual, and moral nature, and can be viewed and modified by the reflective mind.

Power of the reason.

15. That motives arise from the reason is a fact beyond the reach of question. The sense of duty is something independent of any object of sensation, and often influences the mind in opposition to the lower desires. The mind possesses also in reflection a power of modifying, strengthening, or weakening the motives to which we are subject. This is a matter of fact which the most rigid fatalist may allow. It is even an essential doctrine of the system of Spinoza, who, though a complete necessitarian, admits that man can mode-

rate his passions and desires by means of his intelligence. All must agree with him that man is free to this extent. In the words of Kant: "The will is free, because sensibility does not make its action necessary, but there dwells in man a faculty for determining himself independently of necessity through sensible impulses [7]."

Hence, though we may be unable to follow any motive to an absolute commencement, yet we can know for certain that, prior to action, it lies in the mind itself, and is attended, as it issues forth in action, by "a distinct and immediate personal consciousness of causation [8]." So that, without going beyond the self-evident consciousness, we may define the conscious will to be a movement from the subjective to the objective. It is the mind in its passage from thought to action. Its exertion is not merely a spontaneous movement of man's nature, of which he accidentally takes cognizance as it passes, but which would be just the same whether he noticed it or not. This would be the activity of a self-conscious magnet; but is not the whole power which obviously belongs to man, nor that which he calls Will. He is capable of motives, which are not merely subject to the observation of thought, but which depend upon

[7] Rein. Vern. p. 420. This he calls "*practical liberty.*"

[8] Sir John Herschel, in Lardner's Cab., Astron., note to chap. vii.

thought for their existence, and arise from the intellectual faculty or moral judgment.

Question of originating power.

16. But the prior question remains,—whether, in any case, the motive arise wholly or partly from an absolute originating power of the mind, or be always determined by previous subtile causes, and these again by others to infinity. The action of the mind in thought may be itself only a link in the chain of necessity; and the supposed faculty of self-determination an illusion. Every motive, whether of sense or of reason, may be a natural compulsion, like the inclination of the needle to the north.

This is the doctrine of Spinoza, and he holds, consistently with it, that freedom, in the common sense of the word, is impossible. Hence an agent is called free who is not determined by external constraint. On this theory, freedom is not opposed to necessity, but signifies that particular kind of necessity in which the previous causes lie within the nature of the being or agent, and are not imposed from without.

If this doctrine can be established, freedom is at once a mere word, and atheism or pantheism the inevitable result. Whether the chain of necessity be wholly physical, or consist partly of moral causes, it seems impossible to escape this conclusion. However true it may be that the Great All

(τὸ πᾶν) is free, it is manifest that the finite determination, man as man, is not free, but is constrained by influences prior and external to himself.

Origin of motives.

17. We must inquire, then, what we can know respecting the origin of the feelings, emotions, or dispositions, which are the mind's motives to action.

It must be admitted for certain that they are not wholly spontaneous and original, not altogether uncaused efforts of the mind. They depend partly on each man's natural constitution, partly on the influences of education and other past circumstances, partly on present affections of the sensibility. Two men are placed in similar circumstances, with the same choice between virtue and self-interest, and choose differently. Whence this difference? Is it in their natural dispositions? Partly, perhaps; although it is beyond question that natural dispositions may be changed for better or for worse. Is it in their education? It may be partly in this too; although here also it is credible, that the man of greater opportunities may have used them less. Many other circumstances may also have their influence, and are to be taken account of in matters of conduct. But is the whole difference to be traced to such causes? Can we be proved to be in error by those who affirm freewill to be illogical, if we assert it to be pos-

sible that, of the two men, he who has had the greatest defect of natural disposition, and the least opportunity of improvement through education, may sometimes prove more virtuous than the other? Such proof is impossible; for all must admit that the man of less opportunities may have used them more; and, by the force of exertion, the strength of will may have overcome the natural infirmity of temperament; while the other has suffered deterioration of character through the neglect of virtuous endeavour.

But the necessitarian will follow us closely, and will press us with the just question—What, after all, is this strength of will, but a part of the man's constitution from his birth? And it must be admitted that strength of will belongs by nature in different degrees to different individuals, and even to different races of mankind. Yet this admission does not yield the question. The necessitarian cannot establish his case, except by showing,—not only that the power of exertion is a gift of nature, but that the whole act of exertion, in any particular case, is a necessary result of that power; not only that the mind cannot originate any of its emotions, but also that it has no uncaused original power of giving intensity to them, or of repressing them; and that, if it does so, it is influenced, or rather constrained to this, by some other motive, some sense of right or wrong, some feeling of plea-

sure or pain, some appetency or aversion, wholly unoriginated by itself. He must be able too to make this assertion, not only of any particular action, but of a man's whole life. He must affirm that every deliberate choice is determined necessarily by previous causes; and that too, not only in the case of strong preponderating motives, but even in choosing between two which appear to be equally balanced.

Fatalism an assumption.

18. We make this answer then to the fatalist, and it is the only answer *a priori* which the case admits, that he cannot establish his theory without assumptions which beg the whole question in dispute. It is evident that we do not know enough of the inward nature of the mind, to be warranted in denying to it all power of controlling or giving intensity to its emotions by an original and uncaused effort; or, if there be, in every case, some occasion of the mind's motives, we cannot descend deep enough into its essence, to see that it possesses no spontaneous power of giving or refusing its attention when such occasions arise; or if, according to some philosophers, its life be a continued Divine agency,—or, according to the Christian doctrine, it have no power of virtuous action but through Divine influence,—we cannot so see it in its springs of action, as to know that it possesses no original faculty of employing and directing the derived power of thought and

intelligence in such a way, as to draw into itself an increased energy of being or will. It is possible that the derived life must, in the nature of things, immediately possess a power of uncaused resistance to the creative influence.

It manifestly overthrows a system of dogmatic fatalism, to admit any power of choice without an adequate cause; or any faculty of resisting a good motive or a good influence; or any ability to act without cause, in opening or shutting the flood-gates of the mind's activity, in lending or refusing attention to what is before it, in giving intensity to its emotions or in restraining them, in imbibing fresh waters from the Well of Life.

The question of freedom or necessity lies too deeply imbosomed in the constitution of the mind, to be submitted to investigation, or decided on speculative grounds, with confident dogmatism. Logic is inapplicable to the problem. It lies deeper than logic. Instead of saying that the assertor of liberty is a bad logician, we ought to say that the denier of liberty is a bad philosopher [9].

Freewill a practical truth.

19. But all the difficulties of freewill are on the speculative ground. Practically every thing is in its favour. As far as the actions of the mind can be traced in consciousness, it is certain that it

[9] The early Christian writers strongly assert the doctrine of an originating power in man; *τὸ αὐτεξούσιον*.

seems to have an original power by which it can give effect to the sense of right; can make an exertion to increase its intensity; can turn the attention by a sudden effort from one motive to another; choose between a conscientious motive and an opposing impulse of sense, and often subject the will to the weaker motive instead of the stronger.

It is especially in moral action that the freedom of the will is discovered. We are obliged to admit it in practical questions, before we can consider ourselves responsible agents, or understand the law of conscience, or acknowledge the justice of rewards and punishments. The word *ought*[1] expresses a kind of relation which is not to be met with in physical nature, but only in the mind of man. The understanding can inquire only as to what is in nature, or has been, or will be. It cannot inquire what *ought* to happen according to laws of nature, any more than what ought to be the properties of the circle.

This *ought* expresses something superior to all external impulses or inward feelings. There may be ever so many natural causes, or sensible impulses, which move the will; yet this ought prescribes to all of them their limit, and even forbids and directs them. It has no relation to the laws

[1] The following passage is founded on some parts of Kant's chapter on Freedom in the Pure Reason.

of the phænomenal world, but is the language of reason with reference to what is practical. Whether or no reason possess an originating power, we have no means of ascertaining as a matter of science; but it is certain that the causality of the reason is not subject to the law of phænomena.

It is true that "no given action, since it can be perceived only as phænomenon, can begin absolutely of itself. But we cannot say of the reason, that before that state wherein it determines the will, there precedes another state of the reason, which determines that state itself[2]." Hence, however certain it may be that all events and all actions, empirically considered, are determined in certain chains of causes and effects; this, however, is in no degree inconsistent with a causality from liberty, depending upon reason as the permanent but concealed condition of all the actions of the will.

Let us consider such an action; for instance, a malicious lie, by means of which a man has wrought confusion in society. If we seek the determining causes of this action, and consider how far the man is justly responsible, we may take account of the formation of his character through bad education, evil company, partly also from the malignancy of a natural disposition insensible to

[2] Kant, ubi s. p. 433.

shame; partly we ascribe it to levity and thoughtlessness; and we must not overlook the occasioning causes of opportunity. In all these we proceed, as we do generally in investigating the determining causes for a given natural effect. But although we should believe the action to be determined by these causes, we nevertheless blame the agent; and that not on account of his unfortunate natural disposition, not on account of influencing circumstances, nor yet on account of his previously immoral life[3]; on the contrary, we take it for granted that he could have overcome his natural disposition, and could have set aside all previous conditions; and we regard this act as if it were independent of them, and as if the agent commenced in it a series of consequences wholly of himself. It is, in fact, an instinctive principle of judgment, to regard the man as possessing, in his reason, a faculty which could and ought to have otherwise determined his conduct, irrespective of all the empirical conditions.

Conclusion.

20. We conclude, then, that on speculative grounds it is impossible to establish a theory of either freedom or necessity; but that, on practical

[3] But previous bad life may have worn out the power of reason which should have directed him. To make a man responsible, it is not necessary that he have liberty during his whole life, and be incapable of depriving himself of it.

grounds, there are reasons of the strongest kind, for believing that man is really free and able to originate from himself. The question has been already indicated whether pantheism be not the only alternative, and whether the denial of all original mental power do not make the Creator the Author of evil. What this freedom is, how it arises, in what it consists, are questions beyond the province of the faculties. And no wonder. For the question must extend to the depths of the soul's life, and its dependence upon the Author of its being. The Christian may regard it as a faculty communicated, for wise ends, by the Creator: one feature of that Divine Image in which man was created. For moral responsibility it need be no more than a power of resisting the Divine influence, or refusing the gift of Divine life. It is certainly no arbitrary power, which may be laid aside and resumed at pleasure. Though the will be unconditioned in its origin, it becomes conditioned in all the results of its action. It cannot be misdirected with impunity. Beyond question, a man may become the slave of evil habits. Beyond question, the effects may be irremediable, except through a renewed energy from the Source of Life; when once the will of the creature has been turned against the Will of the Creator.

CHAPTER IV.

EVIDENCE OF AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE INFINITE BEING IN THE LIMITING CONDITIONS OF ALL KNOWLEDGE.

1. VAIN would be all the efforts of human thought, if to pass from nature up to nature's God, it were necessary to pass through all the phænomena, and all the chains of causes, both discovered and concealed; to trace the design and providence of the Creator through all the processes of creation, and so, by displaying its wonderful unities, at length, after a long and patient journey, to arrive at the point of dependence. There would then be force in the objection of atheism;—"In the presence of so many mysteries and marvels, which art or science cannot unravel, which philosophy cannot explain, it seems to me an immense endowment, when a man can say with confidence,—I look through nature and beyond nature up to nature's God. The presumption of

the thing repels me[1]." "We are very far from the time," says Humboldt, "even supposing it possible that it should ever arrive, when a reasonable hope could be conceived of reducing all that is perceived by the senses to the unity of a single principle[2]."

The case were indeed hopeless, if this were the only course to reach the foundation of natural theology. Geology and astronomy discover the extent, in time and space, of the field to be traversed; and man might well sit down in hopeless despondence before the impossible task.

Geology has proved beyond question, that the world has not always existed under its present form; but has gone through many changes and revolutions, during periods of inconceivable duration. Nor can we discover the commencement of the records graven in the rocks. They go back beyond the reach of observation.

Again, with reference to the extent of the universe, Astronomy has opened out sublime views of its vastness in space. It has enlarged our knowledge of the solar system, and discovered it to be but a speck in the stellar universe of the milky way. Starting with the earth's radius for its base, in measurements of the solar system, it is obliged,

[1] Mr. Holyoake speaks to this effect in controversy with Mr. Townley, p. 23.

[2] Sabine's Transl., vol. i. p. 62.

for the stellar distances, to enlarge it to the diameter of the annual orbit; yet finds the immense distance of two hundred millions of miles, to be all but inappreciable from the *nearest* fixed star. For the more remote stars, a yet larger unit of measure becomes necessary, to bring them within reach of our arithmetic. Some of them are found to be so distant, that the light by which we see them, must have occupied even thousands of years in its transmission. And yet light travels from the moon to the earth in a second and a quarter of time.

So innumerable are the bright orbs of space, that the whole of the milky way is like a vast shore of luminous sand, and, except to the best telescopes, an irresolvable mass of shining dust. Yet this is not all. This milky way, this stellar universe of ours, is but one of many. Others not less vast, it is probable, than our own, lie at immeasurable distances beyond it; and are seen by us as faint or cloudy nebulæ, which appear, when highly magnified, to be masses of distinct stars [2].

Geology and astronomy have made marvellous revelations respecting the existence of the universe in time and space. But no science has been able to penetrate far into the depths of existence in its reality. We can trace indeed the depend-

[3] This passage does not appear to be inconsistent with any thing which has been advanced by "The Plurality of Worlds." It would be unwarrantable to assume that all the nebulæ are systems of suns. That none are remains to be proved.

ence of cause upon cause, often from the simple phænomena of inert matter, to those long hidden and subtile agents, which play so important a part in the physical world. But a few steps are always sufficient to carry us to the borders of the unknown.

Rational theology.

2. But to be assured that there is a Supreme Being, needs no such knowledge of the universe as a whole. A proof from the principles of reason, has not to search the storehouse of universal nature. It has in itself a universal knowledge of external nature, *in the conditions which must be fulfilled by every existing thing, before it can be known at all as an object of experience*;—conditions not merely subjective, but fulfilled by the external object itself. It must be our next purpose, to consider the limiting conditions of our knowledge of the objective world.

Questions of this kind meet with little favour in this country at the present time. They are attended with difficulty, and have led to different conclusions. Hence the common feeling that all such reasonings are fallacious. But the boast of the age to be guided by practical wisdom and common sense, its contempt for the niceties of speculation, often mean no more than—we will avoid all troublesome thought, unless it promise material gain. Certain it is that with our prac-

tical wisdom, and contempt of philosophy, we are now brought to that pass, that systems of atheism and natural deism, founded on assumptions of false philosophy, have been gaining ground against religion; and the popular answer to them is little better, than that metaphysics are dangerous, and reason an untrustworthy guide. We are therefore to believe as our fathers did, whether we can give any account of our belief or no. Unfortunately the same advice may be given to Hindoos and Mahometans, and ought to have as much weight with them as with us.

It may be observed, however, that the arguments of other chapters in this work, are not dependent upon those of the present chapter. They will stand on their own merits, whatever be the result of our present inquiry.

The limiting conditions of knowledge may be briefly represented in the following proposition:—

PROP.—*Every object of possible experience must have originated in a Being superior to all conditions of time, space, and causality.*

The truth of this proposition depends upon the impossibility of a completed infinity, whether of time, space, or number. Every object of possible experience can be known only as in time, in space, and in causal dependence.

(1.) First, with reference to causal dependence. We are compelled to regard every object of experience as dependent upon a prior cause. The prior cause may often be known; as, for instance, when we trace the sensations of colour to the luminiferous ether; and the dependence may sometimes be traced through several steps. But the chain of causes can never be of infinite length. We see and know but the surface of existence; we may conjecture that the Source of being—the Absolute,—lies at some depth beneath, but may know for certain, that the depth *to* this Source is not infinite. There is and must be an Absolute, in which the phænomenal has its cause and origin, but which is not itself in dependence upon a superior cause.

That each present appearance is dependent upon an infinite chain of present causes would generally be considered improbable. But the question of its *possibility* is commonly regarded as beyond comprehension. But this is not the case. An infinite chain is not merely incomprehensible; it is impossible. Every link of the chain is an additional step within the sphere of knowledge, and we have here no right to speak of any thing as incomprehensible. Number is perfectly intelligible, and it is easy to see that there can be no such thing as an infinite number. It is essentially finite and can never become infinite by addition.

A completed infinity is not only inconceivable; it is impossible.

There is then a present source of reality to both mind and matter. So far as they can be known, their existence is dependent and conditioned. But the dependent must rest upon the independent, the conditioned upon the unconditioned.

(2.) Suppose then either mind, or matter, or both, to have independence within itself: our next step is to show, that its existence must either have had a commencement in time, or must be itself free from all conditions of time, and superior to them. It must either exist out of time,—however incomprehensible the assertion,—or it must have had a commencement in time, from a Being who does thus exist absolutely. Such we shall find to be the unavoidable inference of the common principles of human knowledge, respecting their origin beyond the field of possible experience.

This part of the question will apply equally to space.

The proof of this assertion depends on the impossibility of an elapsed eternity. Common reason revolts from the conception, as something not merely inconceivable, but impossible. We can conceive an eternity to come, because we do not need to regard it as complete, which it never can be. And so, in past time, we may go farther and farther back in imagination, but a completed

eternal duration is as impossible in the past as in the future. It is often said, on the other hand, that we cannot conceive past duration as limited at any particular point, any more than infinite: for whatever distant epoch we may take, still another must have preceded it. Hence the question is commonly regarded as one of opposite incomprehensibles. But they are not equally incomprehensible, nor in the same sense, when the question is considered with reference, not merely to abstract time, but to something existing in time. It is true that time can no more be limited by the mind, than conceived infinite. Both hypotheses are not merely incomprehensible but absurd. But atheism assumes one of the absurdities to be true: theism avoids them both. To affirm the world to have existed eternally as it is, is to affirm that an eternity has elapsed, which is impossible. To affirm that the world had a beginning in time, still leaves the mind at liberty to range in imaginary periods before it, though it can never reach infinity. And reason is made self-consistent by the unavoidable inference, that time itself is dependent upon a Being superior to its conditions of duration. Hence whatever exists under conditions of time, that is, every object of possible experience, must have had a commencement from a Being superior to these conditions.

3. The importance of these questions, and the unsettled state of opinion concerning them, renders it necessary to make some additional remarks.

The prevalent opinion is that of Kant. His Critique professed to remove the question altogether from the sphere of human knowledge. He gives proofs and counter-proofs that the world is both limited and unlimited, and maintains them to be equally cogent on either side. "Of the valiant knights," he says, "in this dialectical arena, whoever makes the last attack, is sure to carry off the crown of victory."

But is it possible or not to define the limits and principles of knowledge? If not, what was the use of his Critique? If it be, it must surely be impossible, by means of these principles, to demonstrate contradictories. Either it must be possible to see at what point, of one or both demonstrations, we extend our principles beyond their legitimate use; or else their application must, on one side or on the other, fail to establish the result; unless at the cost of inconsistency with themselves, that is, of evident absurdity.

If we examine the arguments of Kant on the question of the world-commencement[4], we find that he rests the proof of his thesis,—"The world has a commencement in time," upon the impossi-

[4] First Antinomy, Rein. Vern. p. 338.

bility of an elapsed eternity. He admits the proof to be irrefutable, but professes to overthrow its force by his antithesis,—"The world has no commencement," of which he professes to give an equally cogent demonstration.

But the proof of the antithesis rests upon the assumption, that "no origin of any thing is possible in void time, because no part of such time has, above any other, any distinctive condition in itself, to educe entity from nonentity[5]." This proof may here be seen to be pressed beyond the limits of human reason. The assumption is similar to that which the atheist brings against creation;—"there is no reason why it should take place at one particular time rather than another." But it has no force. Its value is fictitious, because it is an affirmation of what is *beyond* the limits of possible knowledge.

Time out of the world, and prior to its origin, is not what it is subsequently to it. Time is not the same thing with the Creator as in the world. Human periods of duration, are measured by phænomena of the world. They possess comparative magnitude, and it is with reference to our human standard, that we speak of the world as created at this or that epoch, prior to the present. The questions repecting commencement,—"Why

[5] "Eine unterscheidende Bedingung des Daseyns, für die des Nichtseyns."

here?" "Why now?" have meaning when they are made from our human point of view: they apply therefore to all atheistic theories, which make the universe an infinite number of such points of view, and are questions which cannot be evaded on such schemes. But to have meaning in their application to theism, they must be asked from a very different point of view—from that of the Creator Himself; which no speculator can ever reach, since we cannot understand the relations of space and time to the Absolute Infinity and Eternity of God.

Hence if we regard the world-commencement as dependent upon the Infinite Being, the argument for the antithesis of Kant,—"The world has no commencement,"—is found to fail.

Why now? An objection to atheism.

4. This result is no less certain than it is curious. It turns out that the old objections which the atheist has been so fond of alleging against theism, are impotent except against his own theories; where they have their full force, and cannot be answered. It is time the world were done at length with the questions,—"Was there ever a time when the God over all was God over nothing?" and "Why did He create at this time rather than another[6]?" Such questions are

[6] To the question,— "Antequam mundum faceret Deus quid agebat?" Irenæus answers,— "Dicimus quoniam ista responsio sub-

strangely inconsistent from a materialist, who tells us matter is eternal, and mind a product, evolved from it at this particular time, rather than in the geological ages past, and all the chaotic periods of the reign of chance which went before them. For how can matter, if it be eternal, accomplish that at this particular time, which it has not accomplished in a past eternity? Can advancing years add any thing to what is already eternal? How then should more time be wanted for the evolutions and developments which are yet to arise from the self-existing matter; whether we, the miserable victims of time, shall live to see them or not? Matter is generally considered inert and sluggish, but this is a marvellous property of its sluggishness to discover, that after an eternity of being, it should want a few more years to produce the mind of an atheist! Surely in an eternity past, it must have completed all the evolutions, through which it can advance in the eternity to come: nay it must have done this eternal ages ago: it must have been eternally perfect and without change.

jacet Deo." (Adv. Hær. ii. 47.) A more satisfactory answer than Origen's,—"Nobis autem placet, et ante hunc mundum alium fuisse mundum, et post illum alium futurum." (De Princ. iii. v. 3.) Augustine discusses the question, Confess. xi. 12—30, and the purport of his answer is,— "Videant nullum tempus esse posse sine creatura . . . et intelligant Te ante omnia tempora Æternum Creatorem omnium temporum."

The atheist wields a weapon in this argument which is powerless, except against himself. His theory is confuted by the common principles of all knowledge, and that too on the very point which it thought to be the weakness of theism, but which theism alone is able to defend.

The incomprehensible Being.

5. The question must not be overlooked:—What do we mean by a Being superior to relations of time? Without doubt the conception can have but a negative value. We may say that He is a Being Who does not *endure*, but *is;* but this can mean no more than that His existence is such, that it cannot possibly fall under the conditions of human experience. We mean that a Being exists, the manner of Whose existence cannot be included within the limits of human knowledge. To deny the possibility of such a Being is to make our faculties the measure of all possibility. Thus the principles of reason, on which man is dependent for his most elementary knowledges of himself and of an external world, demonstrate the existence of an incomprehensible Being.

But what do we gain, the atheist will demand, by this notion of an Incomprehensible? We gain this; that besides finding a basis for the other arguments of theism, we avoid the *absurdity* which lies on the opposite side of the question. And this is our only possible escape. In the indefinite

extension of time every thing is comprehensible. Duration is a perfectly intelligible notion: we can conceive it to be extended without limit, and can see it to be impossible that it can ever complete an eternity.

The question of the origin of nature is one which we cannot possibly evade. It forces itself upon the reason, and presently involves it in a dilemma. But it is not, as is commonly thought, a dilemma of opposite incomprehensibles, but between an incomprehensible and an absurdity; between a conclusion above reason and one contrary to it. We cannot but shrink from the absurdity, the incomprehensibility is no more than was to be expected.

Is One and Infinite.

6. We gain yet more. When the finite is excluded, we are led of necessity to the Infinite, and obtain by this means the only quite strict proof we have of the Divine Unity. Such a proof might be open to question if it stood alone; and the conception of the Infinite pronounced a mere ideal, because it is no more than negative. But these inferences from the principles of knowledge must be connected with the results of observation. External nature furnishes abundant evidences of the Divine Unity, though they may not repress the madness of scepticism. And the manifestations of immense power, wisdom, and goodness in nature

give a positive signification to the conception of the Infinite. The First Cause is seen in nature to be above us and beneath us; to extend His influence and His agency far beyond the penetration of the senses. He is thus discovered to be Infinite, or to possess that immensity which to man is practically the same thing. Yet the absolute conception cannot, in the nature of things, have come from observation alone, because the finite can never reach the Infinite. The mind is carried by observation to a power beyond the greatest extension of the powers of nature, and so far its knowledge is positive. It then completes the conception of the Infinite from itself. This is often called an innate, and is without doubt a natural conception. It is the natural foundation of the common principles of knowledge. It is a product of the spontaneous action of the mind in its relations with the world, and may be confirmed and established as in the preceding investigation.

In like manner this absolute Infinity of a Being superior to relations of time, space, and causality, furnishes the only strict proof of the Divine Unity. The evidence of nature is sufficient, for in its extent and variety it is as illimitable as space and time. But by means of the principles of reason it becomes conclusive in the strictest sense. Absolute infinity is all-embracing. Superiority to rela-

BOOK II. CHAP. IV.

tions of space and time exclude the notion of plurality.

Thus human knowledge is found incompetent, by its own principles, to include within its sphere all possible or all real existence. Reason must admit that there is ONE GOD, INFINITE IN NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES.

CHAPTER V.

A PRIORI PROOFS.

We may now endeavour to understand and estimate the force of arguments commonly called *a priori:* the *ontological*, the *psychological*, and the *cosmological* proofs of the existence of God.

1. *The ontological proof*[1] infers the existence of the Supreme Being from the idea of the most perfect Being which is formed by the mind. The mind perceives as clearly and distinctly that necessary existence must be included in this conception, as that the idea of a triangle includes the equality of its angles to two right angles, or the idea of a mountain carries along with it that of a valley. The idea of a mountain of marble implies possible existence; that of a mountain without a valley

[1] Des Cartes, Med. v.; also Malebranche, Recherche, iv. xi. ii.; Spinoza, Princ. Phil. Cart. Pars i.; Leibnitz, Op. pp. 177. 374; Kant, Rein. Vern. This proof is ascribed to Anselm.

impossible existence; that of an All-perfect Being necessary existence. Thus the existence of the Supreme Being is concluded from the *content* of the notion formed by the mind.

2. *The psychological proof*[2] draws its inference from the *fact* that we possess the conception of the Infinite, Eternal, All-perfect Being; not from the internal content of the conception as involving necessary existence. Our possession of such a notion must be ascribed, it is argued, to an adequate cause: no such cause is to be found in the self or in the world: it cannot have come from the finite. It therefore requires God for its Cause, and consequently He exists.

3. *The cosmological proof*[3] is different from either of the preceding. It starts from the evident fact that something exists; and infers from this that an absolutely necessary Being exists. So far it can scarcely in any sense be called *a priori*. But having thus concluded the existence of a self-dependent Being, Whose Nature, however, remains unknown, it goes on to inquire upon this point, that it may not leave us with an empty notion. But here, where it might be expected,

[2] Des Cartes, Méthode iv.; Med. iii. Spinoza, ubi s. Leibnitz, p. 374, Nouv. Ess. iv. x. 8.

[3] Kant, Rein. Vern.

even more than in the former part, to look towards the objective, it flies back to the subjective circle, which, in its previous step, it had left behind. It pretends to complete the proof by means of conceptions. It finds that the mind has the notion of a Most Real Being, that is, of One Who, as the Source of all existence, contains all reality within His own Essence; and that this conception, and this alone, involves the conception of absolute necessity of being. It concludes, therefore, that this all-real Being is the self-dependent Being of Whom it was in search.

Critique of these proofs.

4. The first of these proofs,—the ontological,— depends wholly on the Cartesian assumption, that we are to effect the passage from subjective thought to objective being, by means of the principle—that a clear and distinct idea is representative of real truth. The argument is discussed by Kant at some length; but, in point of fact, his objections amount to this, that no mental conception of a thing can carry along with it the certainty, that the thing actually exists without the mind. In short, to use his own illustration, it is much the same kind of argument as if, from the clear conception of a hundred pounds, one were to infer that he actually possessed the money. He considers the proof to fail, because it does not make

good the passage from the facts of thought to outward and real existence.

Kant's opinion appears to agree with that of Aquinas and the schoolmen, who are said by Leibnitz to have regarded the proof as a paralogism. Leibnitz himself treats it more respectfully; considering it as in strictness imperfect, but capable of a more exact statement; and, at all events, morally conclusive, according to man's present faculties.

The cosmological proof professes to supply what is wanting to the ontological in this respect. It appeals to experience for the evidence that there must be a necessarily existing Being; but having done this, in its attempt to ascertain His Nature, it immediately falls into the error of the former. Its first inference is unexceptionable. It declines the short method of deducing the existence of the First Being from conceptions; and yet it relies on conceptions for its whole knowledge of His Nature.

The objection to it may perhaps be briefly stated. Granted that the conception A implies the conception B, and that A exists, yet it does not follow that the existence A implies the existence B. We must first know that the relations of mental notions are correspondent to the relations of real things: which we can no more assume to be the case, than we can assume, as in the ontological

proof, that the notions themselves necessarily correspond to outward realities.

The psychological proof appears, at first sight, to promise a more satisfactory issue. It starts from the fact that man is able to form the conception of a Supreme Being. Every cultivated and fully-developed mind has the idea of God, All-perfect and Infinite. Without it, all proof and all knowledge of His Being would be impossible. Man could neither form the proof, nor attach a meaning to it, if it were presented to his mind.

Whence does this mental conception take its rise? The Cartesian demonstration assigns it to God for its cause; and we have seen in former chapters that the argument is good. But the question is not, whether it be true; but whether, when it is thus briefly stated, it is evident and unavoidable. Suppose the atheist demand how he is to know that the idea is assigned to its true cause: suppose he affirm, with Kant, that it is produced by the subjective principles of the mind, and has no warrant for its objective validity; what answer can be made to this objection?

Kant's theological ideal.

5. Yet it cannot but appear that there is something improbable and unsatisfactory in Kant's discussion of these proofs. If the idea of the Supreme Being, given by the Pure Reason, were without confirmation from other sources, we might think

it to be founded upon nothing but the unwarranted extension, beyond the field of experience, of those principles of judgment which are necessary to us within this field; and might be satisfied to regard it as a mere regulative principle, which restrains and directs the understanding in its empirical application. Yet, even in this case, it would appear an unwarrantable account of the theological idea, to say that the pure reason leads naturally and necessarily to internal representations, which are outwardly unmeaning and illusive. For why should it be necessary to our comprehension of the finite, that reason should claim to place us in connexion with the Infinite? And the question would arise,—Since, in experience, the conception of cause is inseparable from that of an outward world; whence comes it that we so naturally and unavoidably give an objective signification to our conception of a First and Necessary Cause? But if, besides, we have other evidences of the Divine Existence, in the moral nature of man and in revelation; it becomes still more improbable,—as it is inconsistent with the constant adaptation of means to ends which we discover in the world,—that these innate principles of the understanding necessarily conduct us to certain conceptions of a First Cause, which, however, are to be set aside by the reflective mind, as devoid of real meaning and validity.

If we allow no knowledge to be certain beyond the subjective conceptions, then, no doubt, the ideal of theology must be included among them; and the Supreme Being discovered to us by reason, is but an empty mental notion. But if the spontaneous thought discover the existence of an external world distinct from ourselves, it may also furnish a true testimony to the existence of God. Reflection may be expected to verify the one deliverance of the reason as well as the other. At all events, where the claim is so decided, and its assertion so unavoidable, it cannot be summarily rejected as an illusion. Reason is bound to examine it, and to account for it; to inquire into the foundation of its pretensions, and see whether they can be established by sufficient evidence, and on the safe principles of judgment, which give us our common knowledge of the world. It is in this inquiry that we find we have as good and credible evidence of the Being of God, as of any other truth external to the mind itself.

The important step, it is evident, is the passage from the subjective to the objective, from thought to being. Till this step has been taken, we can have no demonstration of His Being, but what gives us the subjective ideal of Kant, or the intellectual notion of Spinoza. We have no proof from reason of a Real Being, unless reason have a means of issuing forth beyond itself. But the affirmation

that the world exists,—a truth as certain as any which can be known,—implies that this passage has been effected. The principle of causality which gave the outlet to the world, finds in the world and in itself the foundation of all knowledge of God.

Only one proof.

6. We cannot argue briefly with Des Cartes, that the idea of God requires God for its cause, and therefore He exists. Without doubt He is the Cause of the idea; but this truth needs to be established on common principles of knowledge. The means of doing this have been partly set forth in our previous investigations. The knowledge of God, like that of the world, is gained spontaneously. The reason can see, however, when it observes reflectively, that as each single sensation requires an outward cause, so the unity of the outward world requires a Cause of all causes; and farther, that as all empirical knowledge is founded on ascertainable principles, so these principles carry the mind, whether it will or no, to believe in a Being transcendent to their possible application.

We thus arrive at the conclusion that, instead of several proofs of the existence of God, *only one proof is possible*, of which the different so-called proofs are portions. The whole proof consists in the *exhibition of the process by which the mind*

gains possession of the idea. This process rests in primary experience and in nature. The idea of God, like that of the self or of the world, is a natural product of the mind, in the course of its development by its intercourse with the world. It springs up from the Source of being. It grows of itself. It becomes ours, we know not how till we have gained it; but we are then able to look back, and to trace the course by which it arose.

In doing this, we can see that the principles of empirical knowledge declare their own insufficiency, and so point distinctly to a Being beyond their reach. They carry us, whether we will or no, to the conception of the Infinite. The cosmological proof states the procedure of the mind, in giving its first matter to this empty conception; and raises it to the positive conception of the source of all being and power. It is where this proof ends that the physico-theological proof, or argument from design, has its commencement. The cosmological, when properly stated [4], infers a Cause of causes, a Source of all reality, from the knowledge of the world as a unity of diversities. The physico-theological examines the nature of these diversities; and from their harmony, their beauty, their marvellous adaptations to ends, in the Order of the material, the intellectual, and the

[4] As it is by Locke, Essay, Book iv. c. x. §§ 3 and 4.

moral worlds, draws its conclusions respecting the Nature and Attributes of that Eternal Power, Who is the Source of all being. It discovers Him to be Living and Intelligent; to be Wise, and Holy, and Good.

The psychological proof is a statement of the whole result of the process in the mind, and the ascription of the resulting idea to an adequate Cause; without tracing it through the several steps by which it arises.

Method of theism.

7. The Divine Nature of the Most Highest is indivisible unity. His attributes are inseparable in themselves; and to a mind which has not been initiated in the difficulties of scepticism all nature declares, with the unanimous voice of ten thousand tongues, THERE IS ONE GOD, THE FATHER OF ALL.

But in examining the evidences of this truth, and inquiring whether this voice be credible, we become aware of the wide difference which exists between truth as it is in itself, and truth as it becomes known to the mind of man. We are obliged to resolve one truth into several propositions; to take partial views, and to establish by distinct arguments what has already come to us as a whole.

The method of theism is therefore humble, and such as becomes man on such a subject. Pretending to no geometrical proofs, it finds that evidences

of a different kind have complete certainty, to convince man of the existence of beings like himself. Habit has taught him to infer the existence of another, from certain general appearances which are constant. He needs many additional observations, and long experience of words and deeds, before he can add to his knowledge of a man's existence that of his character and disposition. He may well be content with the same kind of evidence of the Nature and Attributes of God. He cannot deduce all his knowledge from some single conception, such as that of the Self-existent Being, or the All-real Being; for this were to comprehend the Divine Nature within the limits of the mind. It is probable that God may so reveal Himself to His creatures, and thus communicate a true, though imperfect conception of His Nature. But to found a demonstration on conceptions, we must first have traced the processes of creation from their commencement to the evolution of the mind, and the generation of its unavoidable ideas.

This, however, were an impossible task. Man must be content with humbler methods of knowledge. He must test his results by the common and allowed principles of all judgment. He must inquire whether they are corroborated by the various facts of consciousness, in all the diversified manifestations of man and of the world.

This, then, is our method of procedure; and

thus far it has been carried out, though imperfectly and unworthily of the subject. Deeper and more accurate thought will be able to establish the conclusion on an immoveable basis;—that although we can make no pretension to demonstrations of deductive logic or geometry; although we must acknowledge such pretension to be an assumption of equality with God, and the demand for such a proof equivalent to an assertion that we will not believe in God, because we are not gods ourselves; although the evidences of natural theology must be collected with labour and attention, and must be examined in the conviction that we are infinitely little, in comparison of Him Whom we seek; yet we have,—in ourselves and in the world around us; in bare material existence and in the abiding laws of the universe; in its order and stability, its designs, its adaptations to ourselves—and these, not only in its more palpable manifestations of fitness, but in those deeper adaptations which make it a world of possible perception to the mind; in the vast abysses of astronomy, illimitable, yet full of harmony; in the immeasurable periods of geology, often broken by catastrophes, yet ever evolving new forms of being and higher manifestations of life; in all the processes of nature, whether of material or of vital existence; in the powers which excite, and in the powers which restrain, the pestilence and the tem-

pest; in the forces which bind together the universe, and shut up the sea within its bounds; in those which give life and beauty to the snowdrop, and in those which have hung the earth upon nothing, and strown its firmament with the golden dust of suns; in man, individually and socially; in the ideas of reason and in the instincts of feeling; in the law of conscience and in the aspirations of the soul; in the mystery of evil, with its moral retributions in ourselves and in history:—we have in all, evidences, less palpable indeed than the first appearances of sensation, but not on this account less easy and natural to the mind,—evidences sufficient, according to the common principles of reason, to give us as cogent a proof of the existence, a far more full and complete demonstration of the Attributes of the MOST HIGHEST, than we can ever gain of the existence and character of any one person like ourselves.

CHAPTER VI.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

1. QUIET submission to the inevitable is the highest virtue of materialism. The dead, unconscious matter; the unfeeling, unintelligent energy of nature is the only enduring being. It survives from age to age; it has possessed an eternity elapsed, and is secure of an eternity to come. Nothing can annihilate nor diminish it. It changes through its own inherent properties, and, as it changes, it spreads out in every age new forms of sublimity, new pictures of beauty and design; but it never perceives nor enjoys them. It gives birth to ephemeral creatures possessing wonderful powers of perception, intelligence, and feeling, who are able to appreciate the magnificence of nature, and are stirred by their inborn emotions, to worship One Whom they regard as the Lord of nature, and the Author of their own being.

But these feelings are delusions. There is none

greater than the dead, eternal matter, which cannot change its fated laws. The past eternity was not theirs; and they have no more interest in the future. A blind and foolish fate gives them the few years of the present,—long enough to awaken curiosity, and to fan to life the desire and the hope of immortality; but there is no Being superior to nature who can pity them or sympathize with the cares and disappointments of their useless and purposeless existence.

Fair is the face of nature; fair the features of loveliness to their eyes; thrilling to their ears are the generous accents of truth, and goodness, and self-devotion. But all is vanity. There is no soul in nature, nor in themselves. Nothing is but what can be seen or heard; and the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing.

When the atheist reflects on the desolate condition of nature's best and noblest work—man, it may well be the wish of his heart,—Oh, that this nature were alive! Oh, that the powers which have spread abroad the heavens in their sublimity, and have given verdure and beauty to the landscape, and delicate pencilling to the flower, and exquisite sensibility to the heart, were the energy of a living being like myself! Oh, that the Giver of life could know the soul's sorrows and desires, and listen to its supplications! Better that there

BOOK II. CHAP. VI.

were life in the forces which imparted its fury to the tempest of ocean and of air, and heaved up the terrific Alpine crags, and left them to hang in the rugged majesty which appals, than that all nature should be dead. It were better to be the creature of a malignant dæmon, and to be born and perish in its caprice; for its intelligence might lead it hereafter to see the idle folly of its vain work in creation and destruction; and so there might be hope for future beings, if not for oneself;—better this, than to be the air-bubble of the iron wind of fate, to be tossed unwilling into an anxious life, and to pass as suddenly into nothing.

The answer of theism is that which gives rest and satisfaction to the soul. Theism sees in nature the operation of the Infinite and Good Spirit; and reads His language in His works. It perceives Wisdom and Goodness in creation, directing the Agency of unlimited Power, where to atheism there was nothing but dead matter, and a blind unconscious energy. It gains in the feelings of the soul the knowledge of His paternal care, and the assurance of His lasting protection and love.

It is our inquiry—Can we know this answer to be true? The cosmological proof of the existence of God has given us a First Cause of all reality: is that First Cause a living God? Is the Author of intelligence Himself intelligent? "He that

giveth man understanding," can man know that He understands all things which are or can be?

The answer to this question depends chiefly on the *argument from design*. The cosmological argument gives us a First Cause of all things, an origin of all the latent causes of living mind; but it cannot assure us that He is Himself Mind or Spirit, till we observe what are the particular powers and properties of this living mind, and what are the particular forms and adaptations of external nature. The physico-theological or design argument is founded on particular observations and examinations of nature, by which it discovers the meaning of what, in the cosmological, is expressed by the abstract term—*all reality;* and proves the First Cause to be a living, intelligent, and good Being. It demonstrates that the essential properties of mind,—intelligence and will, can be correctly affirmed of the Divine Attributes: that whatever be the unknown mysteries of His Nature, the Supreme Being is One Who acts with intelligent purpose, and according to the motives of a perfect Moral Will.

SECTION I.

THE DESIGN ARGUMENT.

Its province.

2. It is a leading effort of modern atheism to discredit the argument from design. Even theists are sometimes reluctant, in pressing it to its legiti-

mate conclusions. This timidity, when it occurs, is probably due to the philosophy of Kant. It could not but *appear* unfavourable to theology, that his great work concluded with chapters on "the impossibility of the ontological, the cosmological, and the physico-theological proofs of the Being of God." Atheists, though they overlooked the fatal results of his philosophy to every system of unbelief, were sure to make the most of the admission; and it was easier to affirm his conclusions in their most unqualified sense, than to examine his principles and arguments, and ascertain their real meaning and purport.

But it was far from Kant's intention to set aside the proof as useless. He admits it to be reasonable and useful; not only popular, but, *within its proper limits*, conclusive. His purpose was to restrain an over-dogmatical use of it, which made it a complete demonstration of the whole theological doctrine.

We have observed in what respects it is incompetent. Strictly speaking it gives a wise architect of the world, rather than a Creator. It may be carried, however, in some of its branches, if not to prove the absolute creation of all things out of nothing, yet to prove the creation of every thing that can be known as material by the human mind. And although it cannot alone demonstrate the Being of One Infinite, Eternal

God; yet it is a very important inquiry, whether it may not possess exact certainty in its own department; and, as it is the most easy and popular of all proofs to mankind in general, whether it be not strictly sufficient for the conclusion, which it furnishes alike to the unlearned and to the learned,—a conclusion implying all it can be necessary for man to know,—that the world is ordered by a Living Mind, and subject to the dominion of a Lord and Governor, most powerful, wise, and good.

Such is the inference of reason from the innumerable designs of the universe, manifest even to the uninstructed eye, but extending beyond all penetration into the deep recesses of nature; and, many of them, not brought to light, but through long and patient labour, and the subtile researches of science. Every advancement of knowledge discovers some new design of creation, fulfilled perhaps by secret agents, and in intricate processes of nature; some design long hidden from man, but always accomplished in the silent laboratory of the Creator, from the beginning of the world; and essential, it may be, to its continuance.

Not an analogical argument.

3. It is the argument of natural theology that design must imply a designer, and that that which designs is mind. We are to examine the legiti-

macy of this inference: and first, to show that it is not a mere argument from analogy; not, as it is sometimes represented, a case of probable reasoning; but a strict and unavoidable interpretation of plain facts, on the common principles of judgment. We shall find it to rest on the simplest and clearest application of that causal principle, on which all knowledge is dependent. Its conclusion carries along with it the strict certainty of causal necessity, and gives us a knowledge of existence, as certain and as trustworthy as any we can possess beyond our own consciousness.

Instance of analogy.

If we can imagine it possible that man had possessed the powers of intelligence and will, but had been unable to combine them in intelligent action or design, it would, in such a case, have been impossible for him to gain the conception of design. Mind would then have been known to him, as the living power which perceives the varied phænomena of nature, and is able to originate motion, but not as capable of combination and contrivance. In this case, then, it would have been only *by analogy* and *with probability*, that he could have ascribed intelligence to the originator of the powers which he perceives in nature. He would have passed, with perfect assurance, from the knowledge of power in himself, to that of power without himself; and would

have asked with reason,—'Is it probable that man alone, the creature of yesterday, whose power is so limited, and his existence so transitory,—is it probable that he alone can look on this magnificent universe, and be stirred to admiration by the changing beauties of the earth, and the unchanging sublimities of the skies? Can a world so varied and so vast, have no intelligent inhabitant, but one so feeble and short-sighted? The wonders of nature far exceed his powers of research or comprehension. It runs into mystery, in its commencement and in its destiny; in its vastness and in its minuteness; in things too immense for the mind, and in things too small for the senses; above me and below me, within myself and without: is there no intelligence, which can understand what reaches so far beyond human penetration; no mind, which can trace back the hidden processes of nature to their origin, and read all the mysteries of being?'

There would have been much force in such a question, and the answer that man is not the only intelligent being, nor the first in intelligence, would have had a high probability in its favour. But it would have been an analogical argument, and would not have possessed absolute certainty. It might have been maintained that since the mind of man, the only known origin of power, possesses intelligence along with power, therefore

it is highly probable from analogy, that if the powers of nature were traced to their source, we should find them also to be combined with intelligence.

Critique of the argument.

4. But now conceive man as he is, possessed not only of the faculties of perception and action, but also of the ability to order his actions with purpose and contrivance. He gains then enlarged knowledge of mind. Mind is now not only that which perceives and wills, not only the intelligent and active being, but that which can combine its faculties in intelligent action.

In the conception of design man finds the key to the hieroglyphic of nature, which, once found, affords him an interpretation beyond the reach of doubt, or the force of mere analogy or probability. He now sees in nature,—what was there before, but to him was nothing,—not only vastness, but order; not only unity, but design; not only magnificence, but marvellous and innumerable adjustments and contrivances, all combining to secure the stability of the world and the welfare of its inhabitants.

It is not then by an argument from analogy that he discovers mind in the designs of nature. Mind and design are inseparable correlatives. Of mind in itself he knows nothing; he knows it indirectly as a power which designs. He knows it as intelli-

gent in action, as well as in perception. He obtains this knowledge in himself, and can then apply it in the world. In his own actions, he is able to combine and compare the outward results,—the changes and arrangements which he effects in the material world, with the inward facts of intelligence and will which preceded them. It is through this combination, and in the immediate personal consciousness of thought, intention, and exertion, that he learns to know himself as a being who acts with intelligence, to know himself as mind or spirit.

But he has no such personal consciousness of the intelligence of other men. He discovers them to be minds, as he is mind, only through outward observation, and has no immediate apperception of their inward thoughts. But the communication which has already taken place between his own mind and the world, has furnished him with a principle of judgment, which informs him that he is not alone, but lives among beings like himself. This knowledge, then, is not founded on analogy, but rests on that inductive principle of all knowledge, which compels him to ascribe every effect to an adequate cause, and to estimate the cause by the effect.

The theological design argument rests on the same foundation, and carries with it the same certainty of causal inference. There is design in

nature. The material substance of the universe might fall into endless combinations of disorder for one of order. Design is exhibited, not in a few instances only,—not in isolated cases, which might have resulted from chance in a world where all else were confusion, but in every corner of the world, in things animate and inanimate, manifest and concealed; in all the countless processes and arrangements to be discovered in air, earth, and sea. We want, then, an adequate cause of this order, and we find it in our knowledge of mind as an intelligent cause. It is not, then, a mere analogy, such as—man contrives through intelligence, and man is a living being, therefore *it is probable* that nature contrives with intelligence, and that this resides in a living being. It is more than this: it is an argument of causal necessity.

Truth is one, error is manifold. Order also is one, disorder may be manifold. There may be endless forms of chaos for one world clothed in order, and stored with the designs and adornments which cover the earth. These designs strictly prove its Author to be intelligent. For that which selects and appoints a form of order from an infinite number of possibilities, contains within itself an adequate cause of the preference. It must comprehend the design. We infer that intelligence is present, from the necessity we are under of assigning every effect to an adequate cause.

Not that we have immediate knowledge of the intelligence; but neither have we such knowledge in the actions of other men, nor in any case except in the operations of our own minds. We have always to pass from effects to causes when we go beyond the sphere of the self; and have as good reason in the present case as in any other, for the inference that the First Cause of all things orders and disposes all with intelligence.

Design, then, implies a designer; not probably, nor by analogy, but certainly, and as the only adequate cause thereof.

Like effects have like causes.

5. But are we not, after all, reasoning upon the principle,—"Like effects must be assigned to like causes;" and is not this to reason by analogy, whether it be with reference to men or to God?

To this question it must be answered, that it depends upon the extent to which the argument may be applied. So far as the cause is known and estimated by its effect, it must be regarded as necessarily implied in it, and the knowledge of the cause by means of its effect rests on an identical judgment. Within this extent it is absurd to speak of a probable argument. But if we go on to draw conclusions as to the nature of the agent, or the manner of his action, beyond what is evidently implied in the facts, then the judgment becomes analogical, and can be no more than probable.

Thus in the case before us, the First Cause cannot but be regarded as Mind, because Intelligence is indicated in Its agency, and intelligence is, in all human judgment, an essential and inseparable faculty of mind. It is by intelligent agency that mind is known as mind; and to infer mind from manifestations of intelligence, to infer from design a designer, is no more than a necessary induction. But if we go beyond this, and infer that the Great Creative Spirit of the universe bears a resemblance to that of man in His whole Nature, or in any particular beyond the immediate design itself; if we infer that His mode of action is similar, as, for instance, that He acts, like man, by means of material organs, or through a nervous organism, we then go beyond the identical judgment of causality; we reason in this case by analogy, and it may turn out to be a very improbable application of such an argument.

Extent of the inference.

6. It is evident, in the present case, that no assertion is made, and no inference is drawn respecting the Divine Nature, beyond what is necessarily implied in the works of creation. To say the First Cause must be Mind or Spirit is not to explain the essential nature of His Being; but to affirm His agency to be *thus far* that by which mind is known to us. This, in fact, is all the knowledge man can have even of his own mind;

for here also the essence is undiscoverable, and its nature known and estimated by its effects. These words *mind* and *spirit* may possibly include several modes and forms of being, differing from one another, it may be, as widely as the mind of man from his body. But whatever be their differences, if such there be, in other respects unknown to us, they must agree in this, that they are intelligent powers,—powers which act with purpose, otherwise they could not be included under the term *mind*, but must fall under some class of existing beings wholly unknown to us, and beyond the sphere of our knowledge. It is not only possible, but, on every account, more than probable, that the Divine Mind is, in nature and manner of existence, wholly different from that of man: it is certain that the Divine Power and Intelligence must be very partially represented by the power and intelligence of beings like man. We have no means of learning, and, it is credible, no faculty for comprehending the mysteries of being, and cannot expect to understand the difference between an existence absolute and underived, and one finite and derived; nor between the Power by which all things exist, the Intelligence by which all things are ordained, and that limited power, that glimmering of intelligence, which have been communicated to man, and suffice for all the purposes of this short life. We may well be content, then,

for it is what becomes us, and what is forced upon us by the only principles of possible knowledge, to confess that Intelligent Power is manifested in creation, though we can neither search that Power to its source, nor understand the mode of its operation.

Hume's 'unique.'

7. There is no weight then in the objection made by Hume, that we cannot by analogy discover the cause of the universe, because it is a unique or singular effect, and we have no other universe with a known cause to compare with it. It would seem that we do not want to compare it with another universe, nor with any thing else, nor to apply analogy to the case at all. We do not need to compare its designs with even the designs of man. These last must have furnished us with the notions of mind and of design; but as soon as we have gained them, we apply a principle which cannot be questioned, without distrusting all knowledge both of ourselves and of the world. We apply the principle of causality to infer the existence of mind, as well from the actions of other men, as from the innumerable adaptations of nature.

Knowledge of human designers.

8. But to notice some other difficulties which have been raised. Is there not a wide difference between the two cases? Do we not, in the case of

man and his actions, perceive both the cause and the effect; while in the case of the Creator and the universe, we perceive only the effects? Does not experience tell us that men make watches; how can experience tell us that God made the world? This is one of the specious fallacies of atheism, and derives its whole force from a confusion of thought. There is no essential difference between the two cases. In our knowledge of man,—with the single exception of oneself,—as well as in our knowledge of the Creator, we perceive the effects only, and not their cause. In one sense it is true that experience tells us men make watches; but in another sense, and this the only sense pertinent to the present argument, it is not true. If it be granted that you have learnt to know a certain figure, as that of a man, to be possessed of like powers and faculties with yourself, it is then true that experience tells you men make watches, and execute many other ingenious designs. But for the present argument we must go farther back, and descend to more elementary principles.

The existence of men and of the world might seem to be an allowable assumption; and many will think all inquiry concerning it, to be mere gratuitous speculation. But the atheist forces us to the investigation of our most elementary cognitions. His denial of God is a rejection of the very principles upon which he founds all his

knowledge of the world without him. If he refuse, then, to infer intelligence and will from the manifest designs of the world, we will not grant him that a certain figure, which appears to make watches, is moved by an intelligent mind like his own. It is a well-shaped mass of matter resembling his own body, it moves, and speaks, and seems to act with design; but it is not living, it is dead. It is an organized mass, influenced to action by an inherent principle of order, which it has got from nature; but it does not really think of what it is doing, nor intend it. We have no perception of its thoughts or motives; and the outward manifestations of them, including all the different appearances which go to make up the notion of a man,—these are but scanty and imperfect, in comparison of the innumerable evidences of wise intention and contrivance in nature. Be consistent then: do not believe that what you see making watches is an active, intelligent man: it is a mere natural automaton. You have no knowledge of intention or will beyond the subjective circle of your own thoughts.

But if this were an idle inference; if, in the common judgments of life, you do not consider it necessary to see a cause before you will confess it to exist, but are willing to see its existence in its effects; if you will believe that your infant is not deaf, as soon as a noise excites his attention; if

you will be persuaded that he is not an idiot, as soon as he begins to show marks of thought and intelligence in his actions; and would think it ridiculous in any one to say,—the child however is really fatuous, and only acts as if he were sane, because of a certain principle of order which inspires him; again, be consistent then: acknowledge, in the varied designs and endless adaptations of the universe, the existence of an intelligent and active Mind.

Supposed *reductio ad absurdum.*

9. The preceding observations furnish an easy, and an unanswerable reply, to other difficulties which have been raised. It has been attempted, of late years, to discredit the design argument, by pressing it to a *reductio ad absurdum*. Granted, it has been said, that design implies a designer, and that a designer, as the theist infers, must be a person. But a person, the atheist goes on to argue, must necessarily possess organization. We have no knowledge of any unorganized person. All thought and exertion are dependent upon the actions of the brain and nerves. An organism must belong then to the Designer of the world; and not this only, but also outward organs, wherewith to mould the material substance, and to arrange it. This supposed extension of the argument was patronized by Shelley[1]. "Intelligence,"

[1] Quoted by Mr. Holyoake.

he says, "is only known to us as a mode of animal being. We cannot conceive intelligence distinct from sensation and perception, which are attributes of organized bodies." Paley is imagined to have given occasion to this inference, by the admission that "capacities of contrivance and design require a centre in which perceptions unite, and from which volitions flow[2]." Though he here speaks metaphorically, his words have been taken literally, and the inference is then fair and unavoidable,—there must be an organized frame, through which the perceptions unite, and the volitions flow from the centre. If this be granted, there is at once, says the objector[3], an end to the argument from design; for we are compelled to acknowledge a Creator of the world's Creator, and an endless chain of Creators, one rising above another. The argument has been carried out, it is said, by Shelley:—"From the fitness of the universe to its end, you infer the necessity of an intelligent Creator. But if the fitness of the universe to produce certain effects be thus conspicuous and evident, how much more exquisite fitness to His end must exist in the Author of the universe! If we find great difficulty from its admirable arrangement, in conceiving that the universe has existed from all eternity, and to resolve this diffi-

[2] Nat. Theol., c. xxiii.

[3] Mr. Holyoake.

culty suppose a Creator; how much more clearly must we perceive the necessity of this very Creator's creation, Whose perfections comprehend an arrangement far more accurate and just. The belief in an infinity of creative and created gods, each more eminently requiring an Intelligent Author of His Being than the foregoing, is a direct consequence of the premises which you have stated. The assumption that the universe is a design, leads to a conclusion that there are an infinity of creative and created gods, which is absurd."

The notice of such arguments may require apology: for their weakness, like that of many a subtile theory of existence which has been gravely propounded, may be palpable to the intuitive reason of a child. But since they have been confidently put forward by an able and active atheist, and are said to have been communicated, with a challenge for their refutation, by "the atheistical society of London," to "the Philalethean Society of Edinburgh," and to have received no answer; the estimation in which they are held by their propounders may excuse some further observations.

Answer. Deny the conclusion.

10. The first and most obvious answer to this objection, is to grant the premises of the argument, and to deny the conclusion. Suppose it proved that a designer must be an organized

being, yet will it not follow,—if we may, with reverence, quote the words of Shelley,—that the Creator is "a vast and wise animal," nor that there must be an infinite succession of creators. For the organized Creator must, in this case, be the world itself, which, at all events, is ordered and disposed with intelligence by a mind dwelling within it. If it be allowed that a designer must have an organized frame, still the design argument may prove that intelligence dwells in the world and orders it; acting through its material agents, as the intelligence of man through his body. This world then may, in this case, be called "a vast and wise animal," but it must be different from any animal that we are acquainted with. No animal can order and dispose for itself the matter which composes its frame. It does not communicate the properties to the various particles, nor arrange them, as it may think desirable. Man cannot at will change his features or his complexion; he cannot abstract diseased particles from his tissues; nor renew the feeble organs of old age. He cannot "by taking thought add one cubit to his stature." His own intelligence has had no influence in the formation of his members: his physical constitution is dependent on causes beyond the influence of his mind. Some Superior Mind must have moulded him, by whatever means, for he can see that he is "wonderfully

made." And the world also must have been moulded with intelligence, for the marks of law and design are every where palpable. If it be itself then the eternal being, if the formative intelligence be not superior to it in existence, it must reside within it, and must still be superior to it, at least as the Cause of its properties and combinations.

Hence if we grant that a designer must be organized, yet the design argument is still fatal to common atheism. It will give us a pseudo-theism, which is in one sense more dogmatical than proper theism[4]. For the true doctrine acknowledges the existence of an intelligent First Cause, but pretends to no discovery of His manner of existence. To affirm that He exists eternally in matter is, in one sense, to go beyond theism.

Deny the premises.

11. But this is not the only answer, nor the most decisive. It may be farther objected that Shelley's premises are inadmissible.

Our argument is design implies a designer. It is replied,—then this designer must be organized, or must comprehend in his perfections an arrangement far more accurate and just, than what is manifested in the world. If we seek the

[4] Clemens Alex. (Strom. vii. vii.) notices the fancy of the Stoics, that the Supreme Being must have senses, because there is no other way of apprehension.

warrant for this conclusion, we shall find that none can be alleged, except that the design argument is analogical; and that the atheist has as much right to extend the analogy, as the theist to commence it. We have already answered that the first step—design implies a designer,—is no analogy at all, but an application of an unerring principle of judgment, on which all human knowledge is dependent, but which cannot be extended to any internal discoveries of the Divine Nature or mode of action.

The second step is manifestly no more than it professes to be,—an inference by analogy, from designers known to us in the world. The first step is unavoidable—design implies intelligence. The second cannot pretend to more than probability, and is destitute even of this. Man, it is true, can execute his designs, only by means of material organs. But it is not at the point where the organs act upon matter, but where the organs themselves are acted upon internally by the mind, that we are conscious of the directing power of intelligence. The organs are intermediate between the mind and the workmanship which it contrives, because man's sphere of power is confined to the phænomenal world. He can act only on the surface, so to speak, of existing things. But we cannot argue by analogy, that all intelligent beings must be confined to the same field of

action. The forces of nature are not upon the surface of matter, but act through its substance. The Creator of the world can act by the deep and secret agencies of creation, without conditions of organization. He may wield with wisdom, and direct at will the essential forces of matter, and powers more subtile than electricity. He is the Source of being, and acts from the depths beneath. It is the surface only which is known to man.

Thus the design argument leads to a wise and powerful Author of the world, but affords no presumption that He must be organized, makes no discovery respecting His mode of action. It both corroborates and extends the conclusions, which we have already obtained by a different process. We have seen that it is repugnant to reason to believe in an infinity of subordinate causes, and were compelled to take refuge in a First Cause superior to all conditions of space and time. This conclusion was founded on the principles of empirical knowledge, which give us a world of finite causes in space and time, without reference to its order or designs. The design argument confirms the cosmological and goes beyond it.

Other observations of nature in ourselves and in the world, will yet farther extend our knowledge of God, and corroborate the conclusions which

this argument draws from the physical arrangements of nature. Enough has been said to justify our concluding, in words long since used by Reid:—

"It seems then that the man who maintains there is no force in the argument from final causes, must, if he will be consistent, see no evidence of the existence of any intelligent being but himself[5]."

M. Comte.

12. It may not be useless, in illustration of the principles which have been laid down, to notice their complete negation in the dogmatic atheism of M. Comte. His scientific attainments have gained for his observations on philosophy and theology an attention which they are uniformly too preposterous to merit on their own account. His conclusions, on the most momentous questions, are such as may be expected to follow from his denial of all psychological knowledge. "It is out of the question," he says, "to make an intellectual observation of intellectual processes. The observing and observed organ are here the same, and its action cannot be pure and natural. In order to observe, your intellect must pause from activity; yet it is this very activity that you want to observe. If you cannot effect the pause, you cannot

[5] Sir W. Hamilton's Reid, p. 461. Intell. Powers, vi. vi.

observe; if you do effect it, there is nothing to observe[6]."

In like manner he professes to deny all knowledge beyond that of phænomena and their laws. "Our study of nature," he says, "is restricted to the analysis of phænomena, in order to discover their *laws;* that is, their constant relations of succession or similitude; and can have nothing to do with their *nature* or their *cause*, first or final, or the mode of their production[7]." And again, "The inquisition into the essence of things which always characterises the infancy of the human mind, occasions, first, the conception of gods, which grew into that of souls, which became in time imaginary fluids[8]." He therefore rejects all hypotheses of "fluids and imaginary ethers, which are to account for phænomena of heat, light, electricity, and magnetism." "Those who, in our day, believe in caloric, in a luminous ether, or electric fluids, have no right to despise the elementary spirits of Paracelsus, or to refuse to admit angels and genii[9]."

Professing, then, to confine himself to the observation of the phænomena and laws of nature, he commences from mathematics, and rises through the several sciences, astronomy, terrestrial physics,

[6] Vol. i. p. 11, of "A Condensed Translation of the Positive Philosophy," which has just appeared (1853).

[7] Ib. p. 225. [8] P. 228. [9] Pp. 226, 227.

chymistry, physiology, to sociology, or the science of social life, denying that there can be any such thing as internal observation of the mind, or any knowledge of the causes of phænomena.

But does he not assume, throughout his whole work, the results of the very processes which he repudiates? Why did he compose his Positive Philosophy? Doubtless to enlighten mankind. But how does he know that there exists in the universe another intelligent being like himself? No man can have that immediate consciousness of the minds of others, which he has of his own. M. Comte has surely some apperception of intelligence in himself, which he cannot possibly have of the intelligence of any other person. When he acknowledges man to be an intelligent and moral being, what does he mean by this language? And how can he have learnt to use or to understand it, unless by internal observation of his mental processes;—observation which nature led him to make, without effort of his own, and of which he retains the results throughout his life, however he may pretend to ignore it?

Internal observation, and this alone, can have discovered to him that he is a moral and intelligent agent, or have taught him the meaning of the terms. But he has no such knowledge, he can make no such observation of other minds. Whence then has he discovered that other men exist, who

may be enlightened by his labours, and whose progress is the aim of his science of sociology? He has learnt it by that other intellectual process which he pretends to ignore; by inferring the existence of other minds from the phænomena which show marks of intelligence,—by induction of the unseen cause from the visible effects. Whatever may be the force of his objection to the hypotheses of electrical or luminiferous fluids, which is no question of metaphysics or of theology, he certainly assumes and applies the very principle which he professes to set aside, when he affirms the existence of other minds besides his own. Internal observation can alone discover that he is himself an intelligent and emotional being, or enable him to use the words; the principle of causality must be applied, along with self-knowledge and observation, to discover the existence of other intelligent and emotional beings, and to justify the fundamental assumption of sociology, that there is such a thing as society in the world. Thus, on his own showing, the theological notions of childhood, which he so much despises, are better founded than the positive knowledge of his manhood. He continues through life to believe in the existence of other men, but denies the principle on which this belief rests, and rejects another belief resting on the same foundation. In the theological period of childhood, the mind acted spontaneously,

BOOK II. CHAP. VI.

and was consistent in its conclusions. So true it is that God teaches the child better than the aged can teach himself.

Consistent with this curiosity of speculation, are M. Comte's observations upon two different methods of philosophy, "by passing from the study of man to that of external nature, or from the study of external nature to that of man. . . . All theological and metaphysical philosophy proceeds to explain the phænomena of the external world from the starting point of our consciousness of human phænomena; whereas, the positive philosophy subordinates the conception of man to that of the external world. . . . If the consideration of man is to prevail over that of the universe, all phænomena are inevitably attributed to *will*,—first natural, and then outside of nature; and this constitutes the theological system. On the contrary, the direct study of the universe suggests and developes the great idea of the *laws* of nature. . . . Schools of theology and metaphysics regard the study of man as primary, and that of the universe as secondary. The positive school founds the study of man on the prior knowledge of the external world [1]."

According to Mr. Comte, then, to find in the mind the key to the hieroglyphic of nature, to

[1] Vol. i. p. 356.

recognise the marks of an intelligent Creator in the universe, when once the notion of intelligence has been gained from our own minds,—to subordinate the universe to man, is the method which, in the opening of his work, he presumes to denominate "the theological or fictitious," the method which is followed in the infancy of the individual and of the race, but which it is the business of life and history to outgrow! But does not the universe subordinate itself to man, in order to come within the sphere of his knowledge? Is the universe known in itself,—in its absolute nature? Is not all knowledge relative? What is light without the eye? How does the universe become visible, but through the minute picture upon the retina? Man cannot gain the knowledge of an existing world distinct from himself, but by means of his intelligence and will. It has been shown at length that without will, and without the knowledge of oneself, originally acquired in the action of the will, man could never gain the knowledge of a single phænomenon of the world, much less of any succession or connexion of phænomena by laws of nature. One might think, to read M. Comte, that men were born with a perfect knowledge of the universe already acquired, and, though always using their faculties, remained in ignorance of their possession to the end of their days. In fact, all the powers and qualities by which the universe is known, are

but the universe subordinated to the cognition faculties. This truth is implied in the very word *phænomenon*, to which our author is so much attached. The very term might have reminded him that all knowledge of the universe is, and, in the nature of things, must be subordinate to the mind which knows them. It has been shown at length that the consciousness must be the starting point of human knowledge; and we may therefore accept the inference of M. Comte, that "all phænomena are inevitably attributed to will," and the theological system is unavoidable.

And this is the basis of the philosophy which dogmatically assumes it to be the law of human progress, that "each branch of our knowledge passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical, or abstract; and the scientific, or positive. These are the proofs that M. Comte was "a metaphysician in his youth," and has risen superior to metaphysics. On such foundations it is established that the theology of his childhood—of that period of life, in the individual or in the race, which is nearest to the Being from Whose hands they came forth—that the theology of his childhood was a fiction, and that the atheism of his manhood is truth. On such principles a mathematician and naturalist has presumed to declare in this age of dawning reason, for the en-

lightenment of long-deluded humanity, "To those unfamiliar with a study of the celestial bodies, Astronomy has still the character of being a science pre-eminently religious; as if the famous text, 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' retained its old significance. But to minds familar with true philosophical astronomy, the heavens declare no other glory than that of Hipparchus, of Kepler, of Newton,—in a word, of all those who have aided in establishing their laws[2]."

And this is subordinating man to the universe! But it is idle to argue in such a case. There is no such man as M. Comte. He is altogether an imaginary personage. The name is found, it is true, on the title-page of certain books. But these books declare the intelligence of none except their readers. They are not the productions of a human mind. Even if they showed consistent evidences of an intelligent author, we should not be justified, on their own principles, in concluding that he exists; far less when they exhibit only one side of the human intelligence, and that the lowest. Rea-

[2] Quoted by Sir W. Hamilton, Discussions, p. 312. The translator of "the Positive Philosophy" hopes that the work "may convey a sufficient rebuke to those who, in theological selfishness or metaphysical pride, speak evil of a philosophy which is too lofty and too simple, too humble and too generous for the habit of their minds;" and considers it "the strongest embodied rebuke ever given to that form of theological intolerance, which censures positive philosophy for pride of reason and lowness of morals." Whatever may be said of its morals, it certainly cannot be charged with pride of reason.

son is inductive as well as deductive; and the mind must be stripped of its unavoidable aspirations and feelings before it can imagine its destiny to be fulfilled in the pursuit of science. Assuredly the work is from no intelligent human author. It is "a rebuke" to the metaphysical dogma, "*Ex nihilo nihil fit.*" It has come into existence of itself.

SECTION II.

THE DIVINE WILL.

The first Mover.

13. The preceding section has led to the conclusion that the First Cause of the world is a living, intelligent Being. He is therefore a Spirit. He acts with intelligence in creation, and disposes all things by His will. Will, as known to man, is the faculty of acting with intelligent purpose, and mind or spirit is the possessor of this intelligent will.

This faculty belongs to man, and, he may see assuredly, is not altogether under the constraint of prior influences. But suppose the soul were endowed with faculties and movements, which are not only the partial, but the total causes, necessitating every motive and action of life. Suppose the human will be an illusion, we have still decisive evidence that it is from God, and must, on this supposition, derive the first causes of its actions from His agency in creation. Instead of

arguing with the atheist that man can discover no marks of will in himself, and therefore cannot expect to see them in nature, we ought rather to conclude that, if he cannot find them in himself, it becomes the more necessary to look for them in nature. If his actions do not originate in his mind, he must regard himself as constrained by some mind able to act upon his own. And it must be some mind; for that which acts through his mind to move his actions into correspondence with external occasions and appearances, with inward feelings and desires, must manifestly act with design. The constraining influence must possess then, at least, the same claim to be called mind which is possessed by man. If the First Cause of all existence be the originating Cause of all will in man, He must possess a much stronger claim to be regarded as Mind or Spirit, because He has that power in reality which belongs to man only in appearance.

Hence the Supreme Being must, in this sense, be absolutely free. There can be no cause superior to Him. There can be no such thing as constraint from without. All motives of His agency must lie wholly within Himself. Even the pantheist admits this sense of the Divine Freedom,—a freedom from external constraint, though maintaining that all things result from the internal necessity of His Nature.

Divine freedom and necessity.

14. But the pantheist presses his notion to the exclusion of all liberty of choice. He maintains that every Divine action, as, for instance, the creation in all its parts, results from the necessity of the Divine nature, affirming that a power of choice between things indifferent is the attribute of imperfect beings. If two opposites, it is argued, be equally possible, and there be no cause to determine one of them rather than the other, the decision is dependent upon chance. Every effect must either have its sufficient cause or be determined by accident. He therefore forbids us to regard creation, or any single disposition of it, as an act of choice.

It is here necessary to bear in mind the distinction between a physical and a moral necessity. Enough has been said to exclude the former. As regards the other, without doubt it must be morally necessary that God will do what is good and right. His own Nature is the Eternal Law of right, and He is incapable of being influenced by any contrary motives. It cannot be otherwise but that His Infinite Power will act according to His Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. Or rather, since it can be only from our human point of view that the Divine Attributes are manifold, the Divine Power will be the expression of Wisdom and Goodness in action. God is free then, though He necessarily loves truth and hates a lie: for

truth is that which accords with His eternal Nature, a lie is that which contradicts it. The eternal law of right must rest in the eternal Nature of God, and the Divine agency cannot but correspond to this law of holiness. Thus far the question of choice is inapplicable.

It may still be asked,—Does this moral necessity extend to the whole agency of the Almighty, and determine His work in the universe to be in all things exactly what it is?

We have here, it is evident, a curious and a useless question. We may argue, from the diversity and contingency of things in the world, that such necessity does not extend to all things. We can imagine no *necessity* why men should have double organs, nor why the number of planets or of human beings should be precisely what it is. But it is a mere idle speculation, and deserves no further attention than to observe, that the pantheist has no sufficient warrant for affirming choice to be the act of an imperfect being. It can prove nothing of the agent, but only shows that, external to himself, different courses are open which may equally subserve his ends. In the Divine agency it can signify no more than that, in the relations of created things, there are various conditions which may equally fulfil His sovereign purpose.

Divine motives unsearchable.

15. And this is all we can know on so myste-

rious a subject. The question of motives internal to the Divine Nature is manifestly out of our sphere. We have good reason to believe that the Creator will love His creatures, and will give them means of happiness and faculties of enjoyment. He gives us proofs of His Beneficence in nature, the desire of it in our hearts, and in His word of truth the assurance that "God is love." But we cannot know the motives, so to speak, which have determined Him to create at all. Reason can bear us to a Great First Cause, but cannot look into His unsearchable Nature, much less affirm that the connexion of causes and effects, which is universal within the sphere of our observation, is in any way applicable to the Divine Essence.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

1. It is a common objection of atheism, that,— even when we have proved the Creator of the world to be a Living Power, Who acts with wise purpose,—we are still far from establishing the doctrine of theism; because Life and Power are, after all, but attributes or properties, and the Being to Whom they belong is still unknown. This First Cause, they allege, is a mere abstraction, a personification of certain notions of our own minds, which cannot be regarded as a real Being, because we have no known object to which we can attach them.

The same objection, it is evident, may be made to the existence of matter, the favourite being of the atheist. What can we be said to know of matter, beyond its properties or attributes, and of these except in their relation to ourselves? Of the real substance, beyond the properties of sensa-

tion, we have no knowledge but indirectly, through the causal principle of the intelligence,—the very same principle which informs us of the existence of other men, of oneself, and of the great Being Who possesses that Power and Wisdom which are manifested in nature.

It is a misconception to imagine, that we cannot affirm the existence of a Personal Being, without some deeper knowledge than that of properties or attributes. We know mankind as intelligent beings, and also as sensible objects. Intelligence is not more plainly an attribute or property, than whatever is discovered in sensation. But because the sensible is what strikes us first and most readily, we are apt to fall into the habit of looking upon the sensible object as real, and regarding it as the substance to which intelligence belongs. The unreflecting mind connects its notion of an individual with that of a certain form and appearance; and has not yet learnt that many a man is better known from the pages of history, than from the figure that daily passes along the street. It is not the height, or weight, or mass of matter, which gives us our knowledge of a man. We learn something from the face, for this is an index of the mind. Its expression may, with less impropriety, be called an attribute of mind, than intelligence can be called an attribute of matter. But every one knows, on the least reflection, that the per-

sonal self is something quite independent of the material substance; and that all knowledge, whether of mind or matter, is a knowledge of properties or attributes.

Yet notwithstanding this easy correction of our first rough notions of things, the atheist arms himself with the false association, to attack our cognitions of the Deity; and thinks he can either force us to the admission, that the visible world is the body in which the Creative Spirit is resident, —which gives us, it is supposed, a God not distinct from nature,—or else leave us with a barren abstraction, instead of the Personal Being of Whom we were in search.

Enough has been said to show, that our knowledge of God, as the First Cause of all finite causes,—the Source of all being,—the Power which has originated the existence of matter and of mind,—the Intelligence which has fitted and harmonized the parts of creation, and adapted its living creatures to the purposes of life, by endowing them with the faculties of intelligence, of feeling, and of will;—that this, with the truth most fully discovered in revelation, "God is Love," is a knowledge of a living Being, as definite and as real as any knowledge we can obtain. It is the only kind of knowledge that we can conceive to be possible to us.

Charge of anthropomorphism.

2. There is no force then in the difficulty, perpetually reiterated by atheistic writers, that "man draws together from his own peculiar nature the qualities he assigns to the Being Who governs the universe." This objection, so far from supporting atheism, is perfectly consistent with theism. Human words and human notions, however inadequate to express the incomprehensible nature of the Most High, are surely competent to inform us of His revelation of Himself to humanity. It is true that the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite; frivolous to infer from this, that the finite can have no knowledge of the Infinite. The reason of man, and his faculty of language are gifts derived from the Creator with his being; and the knowledge which they are able to convey, however imperfect and inadequate, is true as far as it can go, and is such as He intends us to attain. We cannot know Him as He is; but we can know Him by His manifestations of Himself in nature and in our minds; and these, at least, can be embraced in human thoughts, and expressed in human words [1].

This relative knowledge, then, is no more to be considered a mere negation, or an empty abstraction, than any objective knowledge we can possess.

[1] Οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἔχει τὸ Θεῖον οὕτως οἷόν τε ἦν λέγεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς οἷόν τε ἦν ἐπαΐειν ἡμᾶς οὕτως ἡμῖν ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται.—Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. xvi.

We speak of a certain relation to ourselves, when we say of matter that it is hard; we do the same thing, when we say of God that He is good. When He is said to be powerful, it is meant that He reveals Himself to us in works, which, in human thought, are works of power. When He is regarded as wise, it is signified that He is the Author of a world, abounding in those marks of exquisite design and order, which, in human language, are marks of wisdom. If we think of Him as good, we mean, precisely as of an earthly parent, not that we know the depths of His Nature, or can see how goodness resides in it, and springs from it; but that His dealings with us are such as show, that He desires our happiness and well-being.

If we find evidences in nature and revelation, that His agency is ruled by attributes of justice, and goodness, and truth; if we can see that wrong doing tends to misery, and can thence infer that it must be abhorrent to the nature of Him, Who ordained the laws of the soul's life; if we find ourselves to be so constituted, that goodness and virtue have their reward in themselves, and carry with them their own assurance of a happy life hereafter; if we have reason to think, that we are in this life dealt with as children of an Eternal Father, Who has placed us in a state of moral probation;—if this be true, it matters not, what

may be the exact relations of our human ideas of anger, compassion, love, to the nature of the Eternal Godhead; it matters not, in what way His dealings with us are dependent upon His Eternal Essence; it matters not, that we cannot know Him in His Absolute Nature; let it suffice that we know Him,—as we know one another and the world,—in His relations to ourselves His creatures, in those laws and effects of His Divine Agency, on which depend our welfare, our happiness, our immortality.

The word Person.

3. There can be no ground then for objecting to the word PERSON, in its application to the Supreme Being. The importance of the truth it conveys, is known to every religious mind. We are now concerned with objections to it. There is necessarily something vague in its signification: but it is remarkable that they who object to it, forget that it is vague in its application to a man. It is very difficult, even in this case, to define its meaning; impossible to define it so exactly as to indicate wherein personal identity consists. We are accustomed to attach the word to a certain form and appearance, with certain mental powers and dispositions; but cannot know what it is that establishes his personality, under all the changes to which he is subject.

It is no wonder then that the word is, in some

respects, indefinite, in its application to the Supreme Being. It cannot here include those limitations and conditions of time and space, which belong to finite beings: but, in other respects, its use is similar in the two cases. It expresses the definite and certain truth, that God is a living Being, and not a dead material energy. Whether spoken of the Creator or of the creature, the word may signify either the unknown but abiding substance of the attributes by which He is known to us; or the unity of those attributes, considered in themselves.

God is a personal Being. Such is our answer to those who say that God is nature. It has been shown to be a true answer. It is easy to affirm with confidence that the nature we know is the Eternal Being. But such assertions are met with better reason. What is the nature that we know? It can be no other than the nature that we see. But *seeing is not knowing.* Atheism is not only an attempt to bring the incomprehensible Creator within the compass of our human faculties: it is a perversion of these faculties in the first principles of their use.

He who will not believe in the God Whom he cannot understand,—let him inquire what he understands of himself. Is he not here also like a child, who can ask more questions than can be answered? Born but as yesterday, he

knows not whence; existing, he knows not how; feeling a life within him, which he can neither prolong nor protect from danger, nor even know, but in its effects;—he may imagine himself, if he will, to be an empty bubble on the ocean of unbounded Being; and may fancy the winds of that ocean to be the iron breath of unfeeling, unpitying fate. But in all the ignorance which is common to man, in all the arrogance of theories, he never doubts that he exists, nor hesitates to regard himself as a personal being. The world of phænomena convinces him of this truth: let him look again to that world, and study it; for it tells him no less clearly:—THERE IS A LIVING AND A PERSONAL GOD.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL.

It may be said to be a natural revelation, which makes known to man the existence of the Supreme Being. Reason discovers in itself, that there must be a First Cause superior to the world, and learns from nature that He is living, intelligent, and wise. It may be expected that the same great truth will be discovered, or at least confirmed, by other facts of consciousness depending on the other faculties of human nature, especially those of the feelings and affections. This part of man's constitution furnishes abundant testimonies to natural theology.

Reason and feeling ultimately coincide.

1. To mention the feelings upon this subject, will be likely to raise the expectation of the atheist,—that we are about to fall into the confusion between what we wish to be, and what really

is. It is a common boast of unbelief, to rely not on feeling, but on reason. Nothing is more certain to be set aside with affected contempt than an appeal to the feelings in the discovery of truth. But it must not be forgotten that reason itself is undistinguishable from feeling, in the attainment of its fundamental truths and principles. No philosophy can be wholly demonstrative. All knowledge must rest upon intuitions, or self-evident truths, or upon faith in the veracity of the faculties. Man enters upon the use of his reasoning faculty, already furnished with the principles on which all knowledge must be built. In his first experience, reason and feeling unite and are inseparable from one another. The mind, though not passive in receiving impressions, is wholly spontaneous in its action. It takes up those impressions which are forced upon it, in that communication between the soul and the world, which is not dependent on any volition of the mind itself, but is a necessary result of the prior constitution of things.

Nature is the teacher of man in infancy, and of the irrational creatures throughout their life. It impresses and trains the mind in early experience, as it guides the bird or beast through its instincts. These are natural impulses or feelings, essential to the dumb animal, for the preservation of itself and its kind. They never mislead, but

are invariably true and safe. Man possesses in his peculiar gift of reason the power of consideration and reflection; but till he arrives at the commencement of his knowledge, he is no less dependent upon nature than the brutes.

The atheist will often express a wish, that the Most High had manifested Himself with such clearness, as to make doubt impossible. How then should He have so discovered Himself to man? Not to the senses surely: for it is but the surface of the material world, and nothing whatever of the mind, that can be discovered through the senses. Nor yet to the reason,—at least not to the logical faculty, which is applied when the fundamental principles have been ascertained. It could only have been through some higher faculty, which could have made intuition of the real nature of God and all creation,—which had been to make us equal with Himself;—or else, if we were to exist as subordinate beings, by some revelation to our minds, which we could not have distinguished from feeling. And, in fact, the word "reason" is constantly employed, to signify not merely the deductive faculty, but, as we have used it, the faculty of the mind for the discovery of all truth, whether of induction or logical deduction.

Writers who have investigated the question of the origin of knowledge, often use indifferently

the words—faith, feeling, and reason—in their account of it; and the difference between philosophical systems which profess to be founded upon the feelings, and those which are founded upon the reason,—the difference between mysticism and rationalism or idealism,—is often a difference of words rather than of things.

Evidences in the feelings.

2. Man's early education is from nature. The question is—Is this nature which teaches him a mere blind agency, the law of some unknown power which is devoid of life; or is it the law and action of an Intelligent Supreme Being? The reason, which is man's peculiar possession, must be called in to decide upon the question; and, with this view, must examine the facts, and sift the evidences which nature supplies. This then is a fair question to be examined;—What are the primary facts, discovered in the affections of the soul; and what is the right interpretation of them? The feelings may thus furnish their independent testimony, upon the nature of Him Who has implanted them.

If the atheist's demand that a Divine revelation should force assent, can be conceived to be answered only by such an influence upon the mind, as must present itself under the form of feeling, let him not decline the evidence which the feelings are able to furnish, because they do not force his assent, in spite of himself. The creatures of

the Great Creator may expect to find evidences of His Being, in every part of nature, and in every part of their own constitution. If nature be penetrated by the pervading Spirit of the Infinite, it may be anticipated that His Presence will be discovered in the feelings of the soul.

It is not by neglecting to take account of the affections, that we are likely to arrive at a right conclusion, upon the Character of the Creator, or the destiny of man. They are a prominent and essential part of human nature. When once it has been ascertained, by innumerable evidences, that the Creative Power of nature acts with intelligent purpose, it becomes important to examine the feelings by the light of reason; that we may ascertain the capabilities of humanity, and thence infer the purpose of our existence. This, it is true, is an inverse application of final causes. But it is very different from predicting the character of the Divine agency in distant spheres[1]. Constant experience may show, that, while we are left in ignorance upon speculative matters of little moment to us, the suggestions of nature on all points of close practical import are ever truthful, and to be trusted. The feelings then tell us something of what we are fit to be; and so, by evidence of which the force can be appreciated by all, give us assurance of what we shall be.

[1] See Book iii. chap. iii.

SECTION I.

SENSE OF THE MARVELLOUS AND BEAUTIFUL.

BOOK II. CHAP. VIII. Sense of the marvellous.

3. *The sense of the marvellous* is one of the strong feelings of humanity. If it be not universal, it is seldom altogether wanting. A man who is destitute of it must be regarded as of defective nature. For certainly the feelings are an essential part of human nature; and it is as reasonable, as it is common, to regard the unfeeling man as inhuman.

But in truth, although the sense of the marvellous may, by nature or by development, be possessed in different degrees, it can never be wholly wanting, without leaving the mind destitute of that natural curiosity, which is so essential to the first experience of childhood. The common things of the world are as full of the marvellous to a child, as the most extraordinary to a man; and the feeling they excite is the powerful incentive to that constant observation and attention, which are so essential to the mind's development. Without this feeling, man could never gain knowledge, nor even become intelligent. He must remain fatuous to the end of life.

The sense of the marvellous is dependent on the perception of power superior to oneself. One of the first feelings awakened in the mind of a child, is that of dependence upon others, whose power is

perceived to exceed its own. Even this ordinary disposition of nature deserves attention. No reason can be conceived, beyond the simple fact that it is so, why we should begin to live in total imbecility, rather than in the full possession of our faculties and powers; unless it be by the disposition of the Universal Parent, Who has ordered the world, and the course of life, with reference to His intention in placing us here. This arrangement of nature is well adapted to beings who are placed in the world, that they may learn to know their subjection, and to confess their dependence upon the Lord of nature. If the world be a state of probation for a hereafter,—if to learn be the great purpose of life; we can then see a reason, in final causes, why it is that so large a portion of it, must necessarily be spent in learning how we are to live but a few years longer. But if the whole purpose of our existence be in the present, it cannot but appear strange, that nature, which in other respects has disposed all things with so much wisdom, should have ordered that, on the average, more than half the duration of human life, should be spent in preparation for the few years which remain.

It may be answered, no doubt, that the operations of nature are wrapt in mystery, and that we are incompetent judges of final causes. But at least it is more satisfactory to rest in the belief,

that this life is preparatory to a life to come, and commences in helplessness and weakness, because its chief purpose is to lead us to the feeling of submissive dependence upon its Author.

The marvellous in nature and in life.

4. Nature abounds in objects which may excite a sense of the marvellous at all periods of life. It always directs us to the illimitable. As reason unavoidably tends to the absolute and unconditioned, so the marvellous in nature excites in us a feeling of the Infinite. To gaze upon the expanse of the ocean or the immensity of the sky, to muse upon the multitudes of the starry hosts, stirs the soul to a sense of its own littleness and feebleness and of the power and majesty of nature, and puts it in a posture akin to that of adoration. Such feelings, like all others, are subject to decay, when oft repeated, without assured belief in the presence of the Infinite Spirit, Who holds communion with man and sympathizes with his affections. Or sometimes they give rise to a dreamy mysticism, which looks not from the self to the Infinite, but delights in the idle revery of self-contemplation.

But the reflective mind, which thinks with feeling and feels with thought, is led by the immense and marvellous in nature to the Almighty Spirit Who pervades all things and fills all nature with His Presence. It is led by feeling to a conviction stronger than it can express in words, that a Great

and Wise Being must have spread abroad the heavens and the earth, and shut up the sea within its bounds. The feeling is supported by common sense. "You may talk as you like," said Napoleon to the sceptics, pointing upward to the stars, "You may talk as you like, gentlemen, but Who made all that?"

This sense of the marvellous is also awakened by the events of life. It is shown in that desire of excitement, that eagerness to hear of something extraordinary, and to know more than is permitted us. Such feelings are a principal source of the pleasure we take in the great events of history, and even in works of fiction and dramatic literature. It is sometimes thought remarkable that men are apt to be so deeply interested in a narrative known to be fictitious. It is a proof that man is capable of finding pleasure in emotions which are not excited by the common things of life. Hence he will sometimes hang with eager attention on tales of the supernatural. Men forget that history is more marvellous than any fiction, and more significant of human destiny than imagined messages from the dead.

The atheist has not failed to remark on these prejudices for the marvellous and unknown, and to account among them the notion of a Divine Being, imagining that he thus showed the notion to be

BOOK II. CHAP. VIII.

unfounded [2]. But how does this appear? Is it to be lightly assumed that man is born with certain feelings and prejudices which serve no end but to make him the sport of his own delusions? Or is it not more probable that the same Power of nature which gives him his principles of all knowledge, and discovers the existence of the outward world, has also endowed him with such feelings as are suitable to his condition and prospects, and direct his thoughts to the Author of his being?

The sense of the beautiful.

5. *The sense of the beautiful* may include all the feelings which are excited by beauty, of whatever kind, whether in nature, in science, or in art. The pleasures arising from these sources must evidently be dependent upon some relation between the universe and the soul of man. The pictured landscape and the gorgeous sunset are beautiful only to the inward sense; without it, the traveller would look unmoved on the richest scenes of nature. On the other hand, man might have been susceptible of this feeling, yet have inhabited monotonous plains or a barren rock like the moon, where he must have been a stranger to the pleasures which are derived from the varied scenery of the earth.

[2] As in the "System of Nature," part ii. chap. iii.

We need no exact acquaintance with the philosophy of the sublime and beautiful, to be familiar with the soul's sensibility in relation to external nature. Custom, hereditary indifference, accidental circumstances, may variously change and modify the sense in different people or individuals; but this cannot affect the manifest fact, that human nature, in its proper development, is sensitive to feelings which the Cosmos,—the adorned world,—is so well calculated to excite.

We can conceive no cause of this adaptation, except in the design of One Intelligent Author of both man and nature. It seems as though, in the words of Madame de Staël, "the physical world were the basso-relievo of the moral. If the same genius were capable of composing the Iliad and of carving like Phidias, the Jupiter of the sculptor would resemble the Jupiter of the poet." "Nature," she says again, "delights in giving more splendour to the flowers than to the vegetables which serve for food. If what is useful held the first rank, would she not adorn the nutritious plants with more charms than roses? The beautiful recalls to our minds an immortal and Divine existence[3]."

The sense of the beautiful, like that of the marvellous, tends to raise man above himself, and to

[3] Germany.

stir that feeling of the Infinite which corresponds to the Absolute of reason. It excites this feeling in the mystery of its origin and in the perfection of its ideal. The soul is moved by beauty to admiration or to love, but cannot analyse its affections, nor account for them, nor trace them to their source. And they tend to the conception of perfect beauty. Natural objects have always their imperfections. They lead the mind to seek, in its beau ideal, a perfection not realised in art or nature, but which it would fain persuade itself is something more than an empty notion of its own. And thus, through the various kinds and different degrees of enjoyment which this sense affords, the expectation arises of other scenes of beauty and other forms of existence, capable of yet higher and more varied gratifications than this present world.

Beauties of science.

6. It is worth notice how often the sense of the beautiful is excited, by reducing the various and manifold phænomena of nature to some single principle or law. This observation applies especially to the beauties of science; and the most remarkable instance is the law of gravitation. Few minds are insensible to the pleasure of tracing back the various movements of the material universe to the simple law of attraction. It was a great and interesting discovery, to learn that one

and the same force retains the moon in her orbit, and causes the apple to fall to the ground. This may not appear obvious to all readers. For why does not the moon fall to the earth like the apple? But if the apple instead of falling by itself be projected horizontally from the hand, it will then descend in a curve line; and the greater the force of projection, the longer will it be in reaching the ground. And when it reaches it, it falls with a force which would have carried it farther if it had continued in free space. Hence if it could be projected with sufficient force, it would go beyond the earth, instead of falling to the ground; and if the force were not too great, and there were no atmosphere to stop the motion, it would fall round the earth, and be always falling to it, instead of going off in a straight line, yet would never reach it. It would continue always at the same distance from the earth, and would revolve about it. But when this single cause of attraction is carried out into the innumerable phænomena of astronomy, the planetary and lunar inequalities, the precession of the equinoxes, the flow of the tides; when it is found that the force which retains man on the surface of the globe, is the same force which binds together the universe, and extends its influence to the distant systems of the sky; the mind cannot avoid the feeling, that immensity is comprehended in simplicity; and passes, in this

BOOK II. CHAP. VIII.

feeling, to the One Cause and Principle of all the forces and beings of nature, Who gives, at once, their existence, their diversities, their harmony, and their movements to them all.

The direction of science is always from the complex to the more simple. It tends to trace back the many to the One. And the mind is so constituted, as naturally to find pleasure in this tendency. The question recurs;—Is it a mere accident that it is naturally delighted with the variety and beauty of the world, and, in the mysterious feeling of the beautiful, rises to the expectation of a better life? Is it but chance which has disposed it to be gratified, when it thus finds a single principle which may account for many effects; as if nature would put it in the way of referring all things to One Great Cause? If this constitution of the mind cannot, of itself, be considered a demonstration of theism, at least it falls in with the doctrine. It corroborates the stricter proofs. It is exactly what we might expect, if we knew nothing of the world or man from experience; but had learnt that they were the workmanship of an All-wise Creator, and formed a state of probation for a future life [4].

Not utilitarian.

7. Such considerations become the more forcible,

[4] Οὐκ αὐτοποιητὸν ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ κάλλος, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χεῖρος καὶ γνώμης πεμπόμενον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Athenagoras Legatio, 34.

when we observe that the sense of the marvellous and that of the beautiful, are not necessary for any utilitarian purpose of life. They are not meat and drink. The pleasure they give is something distinct from material interests, and even opposed to their exclusive pursuit: for they die out of the soul, which wastes its energies in paltry world-ambition, or the acquisition of gain. We may be told, indeed, that their purpose is the development of the race in their intellectual and moral nature; that they point to this end, and tend to it as their effect. But the question remains,—Whence these faculties of improvement? And have they no end to serve in each individual? The atheist may rest content in ignorance: but the mind instinctively breaks through the restraint, and will answer, in spite of scepticism;—These faculties are from a wise and good Creator; Who, as the all-real Being, contains in Himself the eternal source of all excellency, which can ever be displayed in creation; Who would be known by man as "Perfect Beauty," worthy of all praise and adoration; Who, after the highest progress of man in time, and his continual advancement in eternity, will still be the Source of all perfection, still "the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely."

SECTION II.

THE BENEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.

Instincts and affections.

8. In the benevolent and social affections of the soul, is to be found the source of some of the best and purest happiness of life. They afford at once beautiful instances of creative purpose; and, beyond the manifest designs, convey intimations of the Creator's intentions concerning us, in the gift of original capacities and affections, which find not their satisfaction upon earth. It is in these and the other affections, that, together with the indications of a Creator, we find the most credible evidences of immortality.

The Wisdom of that Great Power, Who has wrought in nature, is richly and variously manifested in the instincts of animals. It is seen in those natural faculties, which prompt them to the exact habits for which their organs are adapted, and direct them to the supply of their wants, and the rearing of their young. The same designs are manifest, in a higher degree, in the constitution of man; and compel us, if we will use our reason at all, to infer the existence of a creative mind.

But the affections of the human soul are not, like those of the lower animals, blind instincts which find their full employment, in providing for the wants of the present. Who does not know,

that the feelings of the heart go far beyond any calculating or utilitarian purpose? Some feelings or instincts there must be for the continuance of the race, and for the possibility of political and social union. But the best attachments of the heart tend beyond the necessities of life. There is something more than animal instinct in the affection of a parent, and in those loves of kindred souls, which are rare indeed, amid the selfishness of the world, but have been known to be stronger than the love of life. Such affections cannot be conceived to be educed from insensate matter, through the action of blind eternal laws. It is impossible to ascribe to such an origin the adaptations of the material world; it is equally repugnant to reason, far more abhorrent to feeling, to imagine that the concourse of impassible atoms, or the movements of electric fluids, could ever have given birth to the love of a mother, or the sensitive affection of a child.

It is true that men exist, by whom these and all the best affections of human nature are neither possessed nor appreciated. It is certain that the sordid calculating spirit, the sensual mind, the absorbing love of gain, is incompatible with the best affections. The low enthralling desires, the grovelling ambition of self, speedily debase the soul; drying up its fountain of generous affections, and leaving it a mere instrument of hard reason and

calculation; such as it might have been expected to be, had that Creative Power Which never works in vain, intended it to soar no higher than the processes of material development, and the advancement of a material philosophy. But humanity is to be estimated by its best and highest moments, not by its degenerate types.

Evidences of immortality.

9. Little attention to nature discovers it to be a general law, that she does nothing in vain, and always accomplishes her ends by the shortest means. It is true that we are generally incompetent judges of her purposes, till the observation of facts has informed us of the end, as well as of the contrivance. But her innumerable designs are too plain to be mistaken. They are not less evident in the mental constitution of man,—his reason, his affections, his moral nature,—than in the material adaptations of the world. If we are to regard ourselves as mere transitory productions of nature, who live our day and die for ever, we can assign no probable origin nor adequate purpose to the highest and best faculties. If an unintelligent, unfeeling power, directed by necessity or chance, be regarded as the cause of all things; this power is chargeable with the singular inconsistency of manifesting consummate wisdom in all those lower designs, which have their complete fulfilment in the brief period of animal life, and casting aside

this wisdom, when she put forth her highest energy, and bestowed her most glorious and god-like gifts on man.

Is it not more likely that we who observe nature, and pass judgment upon her designs, are chargeable with inconsistency; in acknowledging her manifold wisdom in all her works which we can understand, and then refusing to credit her wisdom any farther than the purpose may be palpable to our eyes? For certainly her labour is in vain, if she have made us capable of pure and exalted affections, which are only fanned into life to be speedily stifled in the thick, chill gloom of death. The Power Which has wrought in nature is surely too good and too wise, to have provided so abundantly for our lowest wants, and to have made no provision for the highest and best affections of the soul. It is instinctive to us to reject the notion, that these affections have been bestowed for no purpose beyond the present state of existence; where, though capable of pure and holy happiness, they are so seldom able to attain it; and, when they do, are soon torn asunder and disappointed. The natural feelings, which no logic can refute, for they are deeper than logic, refuse to believe that One less than a God of Love has given life to the lovely and the loving soul. They naturally repose in the hope and consolation of religion, and look to God and to eternity for the

revival of those affections, which, in their best estate, are subject to sadness and fearfulness in life, and are so soon to be divided by the unpitying hand of death. The truth of God and immortality can alone give any account of their existence, or promise them the satisfaction they desire. The heart can rest in peace, when it believes that a Great and Good Creator has bestowed on us the capacity of sympathy and love, that we may love both Him and one another, in a more enduring existence.

Marks of the Divine Character in nature.

10. It is hard to imagine that, in this marvellous and beautiful universe, man, so little and so fleeting, should alone be capable of love. The soul looks out of itself upon the creation, and, from the face of nature, draws its instinctive inference of the Presence of an All-pervading and Good Spirit; just as by feeling, which it cannot analyse, it will draw its inference from the expression of the living face, and think it knows something of the man. By a mind thus sensitive nothing is viewed merely as mechanical. Every thing is full of life; nature is the language of a Spiritual Creator, and is responsive to the spirit of man. In the majestic firmament of suns, is manifested the Majesty of the Almighty; in their abiding laws, His Unchangeable Consistency; in the slow processes and developments of the material world,

He is seen to act with patient determination; never precipitating things, working by slow unerring laws, which accomplish their ends with a certainty, that may well be fearful to one regardless of the laws of right; since the moral laws, so manifest in man's constitution, must as certainly continue, and effect their ends in ages to come, as the physical laws have continued in ages past.

But the soul desires and anticipates, what nature again confirms as true, that the Creator may be One whom it can love. It sees good marred with evil in the world, and evil often dominant over good; but it finds enough to satisfy it, that all good is of God, all evil of the creature. It beholds the goodness of the Creator in the loveliness and innocence of a little child; and can infer the evil that springs of man, from the fear of what the child may become in after-life. And thus it is able to look on all nature. The shadows of the universe will not hinder the devout spirit from contemplating its brighter aspects with affection to its Author. His smile is in the gladdening sunshine of spring; His care in the rich fields of autumn; nature's velvet mantle, her flowered robe, the varied profusion of her adornment, indicate the Creator's disposition to His creatures, and His will that they be cheerful and happy.

Or if nature oppress by her vastness, and excite awe by the uniformity of laws, which must soon

deliver us to death; the soul finds strength in her own feelings, which may be firm against the forces of the universe. In her sense of feebleness, she has the assurance of a Protector; in the desire to possess the regard and affection of a Heavenly Father, the certainty that she will possess them. She is the creature of that Creator, Whose work is every where, and every where suited to its end. He imparted her affections; and, in so doing, gave a promise that He will not despise them.

SECTION III.

THE SENSE OF DUTY.

An original faculty.

11. The observations of the preceding sections have weight, at least as corroborative evidences of the truth of theism; and are, to some minds, its most convincing proofs. The theist cannot doubt that the Author of nature speaks to the minds of His creatures through their feelings, and discovers Himself by means which they may often be unable to analyse, or to make known to others. The soul may hear His Voice; while it knows not by what way He approaches it.

But the evidence which depends on the sense of right, is generally considered more independent and conclusive. It is in his moral nature, next to revelation, that man has the strongest argument against pantheism. The distinction between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, between

moral good and evil, must be assumed as a fundamental and inevitable fact. It is implied in such words as *duty*, and *right*, and *ought*, which are to be found in all languages. The word *ought* carries with it a peculiar sense of its own, and brings us into a new region of ideas. It introduces us, we may say, into a new world. Other sciences tell us what is or must be; what ought to be is altogether a distinct inquiry.

It is universal.

12. To say that the notion conveyed by this word is universally understood by mankind, it must be isolated from all question of the *what* or the *why*. Men may differ widely, as to *what* ought to be done under given circumstances, and *why* one line of conduct should be preferred to another. They agree unanimously,—or, if there be any exception, it will be allowed to prove some men to be degraded to the brutes,—that of two opposite courses, one is often right, the other wrong; one ought to be followed, the other avoided.

The love of children is a natural affection, and most men will allow that a parent ought to love his child. But some tribes have offered their children in sacrifice, regarding this enormity as a paramount duty. Others have exposed or murdered them, when the natural feelings of love and duty have been worn out by privation, or other

cause; perhaps excusing themselves with the thought, that necessity compelled them to do what they ought not; perhaps still holding to other duties, or imagined duties, which are at least a homage to the truth.

But the conduct of unnatural savages can no more set aside the sense of duty, as a fundamental fact of human nature, than their ignorance and mental imbecility can be alleged to prove that man is not an intelligent being. The faculties of the mind, and the facts of human nature, are to be ascertained by reference to the highest, not to the most degraded types of mankind. Whatever be the condition of savage and cannibal tribes, it remains true that man possesses a peculiar sense of right and wrong, a feeling that this ought to be done, that to be left undone. Every man may see, if he will, that there is a constant opposition of good and evil in the world; that there is, or has been, some struggle between duty and inclination in himself.

In short, there is a faculty in man, distinct from all others, which assumes the right of governing the rest, and of commanding him in his conduct. Its commands may differ in different men; they may be altered or modified by many circumstances; they may be ascribed to various sources of authority; but the fact remains, that there is some authority, which utters *the moral imperative*

within the soul, and commands it to do this or that.

This then, if it be considered attentively, is an important fact of man's nature. It is a specific and peculiar property of his constitution. He might have been, in other respects, what he is; he might have possessed the same physical nature, the same senses, the same intelligence, the same power of action (though without choice); yet have been destitute of all notion of duty, unable to attach a meaning to the proposition,—'This is what I ought to do,'—or, therefore, to form the word on which its meaning is dependent.

Pantheism in its relations to morality.

13. Now it must be allowed that a theory which accounts for all the facts of human nature, is preferable to one which denies them. The pantheist looks on the distinction of right and wrong as one of mere appearance, depending upon man's limited and partial views, and having no ulterior meaning. Virtue and vice then are mere names of things, as they appear to myself, or connexions of finite things, in their relation to one another. They have no higher significancy, and are equally necessary determinations of the great *All* of things.

This theory is not only an assumption, but one which gives a less simple, and less probable account of obvious facts than the doctrine of theism.

When it is granted that, as far as human reason can go, there is a manifest distinction of right and wrong, and the question arises,—"Has this distinction meaning beyond the limits of reason?"—it is more probable to assume that it has, than that it has not. For if it extend no farther, if the distinction of right and wrong be unmeaning beyond the world of appearance, whence, and how, and why does it arise in this life of ours? If every event, and every action of human life, be but a link in the great chain of necessity, how comes it that man is led by nature to trouble himself with an *ought?* Why should he be perpetually harassed with calls of duty and feelings of right, if right and duty be mere phantoms, which have no existence but in his own imagination, and serve only to scare him, or to sting him with remorse? To account the sense of right among the motives of fate, which determine actions in their course of necessity, is to attribute to a blind fate or chance, not only the power to create, but also the disposition to deceive,—and that too a disposition which is often thwarted in its attempts. This is to make nature not only a deceiver, but a weak deceiver; a deceiver, in influencing man's conduct through motives resting on imaginary duties and obligations; a weak deceiver, in suggesting such motives, and then leaving them, as they so often are, fruit-

less of all result, except a vain and false regret that a man has not done what he ought to have done and could have done.

This, to say the least, is an improbable theory. It is at variance with the law of parsimony, that 'nature takes the shortest way to her ends.' If we were reduced to a choice of assumptions, the doctrine of theism has here so much the advantage of pantheism, on the ground of simplicity, that this alone would go far to recommend it. Instead of leaving man the sport of unavoidable delusions, theism assures him that the motives of moral obligation are as truly momentous as they appear to be, and extends the difference of right and wrong beyond the mental world of man, to the relations in which he stands towards the Supreme Creator. It assigns, what reason and feeling demand, both an Author and a purpose of his moral constitution, representing the moral principle as the spring of those motives, which are to keep the will of man in union with the Will of Him, Who has communicated active powers to subordinate creatures.

Atheism in its relations to morality.

14. The atheist will often, he may think sincerely, acknowledge, with the theist, the distinction of right and wrong, and the obligation to do right. But he can give no account of the origin or use of this obligation. He may call it a funda-

BOOK II. CHAP. VIII.

mental fact; but he denies, what is a part of the fundamental fact, that the mind instinctively refers the obligation to a Lawgiver and Judge. Without this reference, the words *ought* and *duty* lose that distinctive meaning which the mind cannot help attaching to them. The atheist is inconsistent with himself, if he deny a Superior Power while he uses words which imply One. The notion of duty, in the proper sense of the word, becomes a delusion. He who acknowledges no Power superior to himself, in effect claims to do as he will; or, at best, to indulge his taste, or to be guided by rules of expediency and public law. To deny the Supreme Being, and then talk in fine words of truth, and virtue, and morality, is much the same thing, to compare things infinite with finite, as for a man to turn his parent from his doors, and then amuse himself by venerating his picture.

The Epicurean system.

15. The Epicurean system is a denial of morality. A man's pleasure or happiness is his chief good; and he is to determine for himself wherein his pleasure shall consist. Modern utilitarianism has higher aims and pretensions; for its purpose is not the happiness of the individual, but the general happiness of the race. When connected with atheism it is, no less than the selfish system, at variance with the incontrovertible fact of consciousness, that the notions, *truth*, *virtue*, *duty*,

are independent of all considerations of pleasure or utility, whether of one person or of many; are often opposed to such considerations, and involve that which claims to be superior to them. These schemes have no answer to the question,—'Why ought a man to seek the happiness of others, even of all mankind, rather than his own?' and 'Why his own ultimate advantage, if he choose to prefer present pleasure?' A law is null and void without a lawgiver and a magistrate. A man does not feel bound to submit to a code written in some old book which he has dug out of the ground. Yet such is the origin of the atheist. He regards himself, with all the laws of his nature, as the chance product of materialism. Talk as he may of laws of morality, he is better than his speculative philosophy, if he do not set them at defiance whenever it may be his inclination. The love of mankind is a noble principle, but it is inseparable from the love of God. Pretensions to either without the other are of equal value, whether in atheists or in religionists.

The Stoical morality.

16. The Stoical morality seeks its principles of right in human nature, and enforces them, because they tend to elevate the character of man to its highest dignity, and with a view to self-complacency and self-esteem. This is the highest morality of atheism. The Stoical atheist finds a law within

himself, which tends to the harmony of his soul and the elevation of his nature; he pretends to give no account of it; he knows of no Lawgiver; but he adopts the law, constitutes himself the magistrate, and then rewards his own obedience, and repays himself for his exertions on the side of truth or virtue, by imagining himself a hero or a god.

Error is partial truth. Unquestionably virtue and goodness tend to harmonize the soul, and to exalt the character. But whence this tendency? Whence the feeling that it ought to be fostered, though often at the cost of self-denial? And what restraint can be imposed on one who is willing to sacrifice his better qualities to the gratification of his vile and malignant passions? Temporary excitements may be thought to compensate for degeneracy of character, if there be no life beyond the present. Meanness may skulk through a few short years, and, being blind, imagine itself unseen. But no one can deliberately choose to be destitute of every generous quality and aspiration, who believes that the soul will live on through death, though the cloak of mortality be laid down.

Thus the Stoical system is open to similar objections with the former. Moreover it reduces human life to a course of solemn trifling; such as it would be, if nature terminated the life of all, as soon as they have passed through early childhood and have gained possession of their faculties. In the school

of virtue, the best of men are but learners to the end of their days. The Stoic dies before he deserves his self-esteem. The whole of a well-spent life effects that work for the noblest part of man, which is effected for his lower faculties during childhood;—a strong indication that the perfect life of the soul will be hereafter.

Theism alone takes account of all the facts of man's moral nature, and gives them an origin and a purpose. Man is the creature of a wise and good Creator, and is capable of independent conduct. He is placed in life, as a state of trial, and possesses, in the gift of life, powers of responsible action. In the nature of these powers he may find indications of the Divine Character. But before he examines them minutely, he may see that the sense of duty in its most abstract form,—the absoluteness of the moral *ought*,—is an evidence of a Being superior to himself, who is not only a Creator but a Lawgiver; not only a Lawgiver, but a Judge. And he has motives higher than the Stoic. On the question,—Why a man should keep his word,—he can see that the answer of the old philosopher is true as far as it goes. "The philosopher," says Locke[5], "would have answered because it is dishonest, below the dignity of man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfec-

[5] Essay, i. 3, § 5.

tion of human nature, to do otherwise." This reason, though imperfect, is better and nobler than the same illustrious writer puts into the mouth of the Christian:—"Because God, Who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us;"—a servile motive, which exposes Christianity to the criticisms of infidelity. The Christian's motives are not merely an obligation to Superior Power. They are to be sought in the Divine Character, *and the relations of the creature* to the Creator.

SECTION IV.

THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL.

A purpose necessary.

17. Labour, and anxiety, and contending effort, fill up the chequered drama of human life. Few men, whatever their station or their education, can altogether quell the feeling of self-degradation, while they propose to themselves no end nor purpose beyond the indulgence of the present desire, or the gratification of the passing moment. That most wretched of beings, the restless pleasure hunter, who flutters from one excitement to another, with as little thought, reason, or expectation, as the ephemeral insect,—even he, if one address him in those unavoidable intervals, when he lounges in listless depression, and torments himself with vain attempts to kill the time, and ask him what end he proposes to himself in life,—

will sometimes hardly disguise his confusion, when he reflects that he has no purpose at all; that his pursuits are those of the vilest irrational being, and his enjoyments can be no more enduring. The least reflection convinces every man that he ought to have a purpose, and no light purpose in life. Voltaire used all his wit, to laugh the world into the idea that life is nothing. But with little success. In the endless varieties of human pursuit, few can quite repress the feeling, that life is a very serious thing.

The more common condition of men is to be striving and toiling for some end, which they have proposed to themselves in the present. The battle of life is a common phrase, and expresses the truth that men are continually endeavouring to rise, and to pass one another in the world. Some are engrossed in the pursuit of wealth; some make an idol of power, or professional success, or intellectual achievement, or other object of ambition. Some work their way by honest endeavour, others have recourse to the arts of flattery or intrigue; but few comparatively are content to be what they are; very few are so torpid, that, if they care not to employ themselves well, they make no effort to appropriate the rewards and honours which they will not earn.

Misery of indolence.

18. Let us observe this fact attentively. It is

manifestly natural to man to be unhappy when he has no engaging pursuit, and is without the prospect of rising, in some way, beyond his present condition, or of accomplishing some end which he has set before him. "Work is our only worship," says the atheist, assuming the fact of which we speak. For what end then? we may ask. Is it all but labour in vain? He may answer that we find ourselves unhappy in indolence, and may add with truth, that indolence breeds not only wretchedness, but vice and moral meanness.

This then is an original fact of man's constitution. He is such by nature that it must be so. But can no reason be given, is no assignable end to be served by this disposition of nature? At least it must be admitted that a system which does inform us why we are constituted in this or that way, and shows us duties which devolve in consequence, is preferable to one which simply admits the fact, but can neither account for it, nor assign it a purpose.

The misery of indolence urges man to seek some diversion or pursuit: and yet he finds but discontent, and disappointment, in even the most brilliant success. What excited eager ambition in the pursuit, fails to bring happiness when attained; and, if it can look no farther, leaves the soul still restless and dissatisfied. If the pursuit be wealth; a man will far exceed his first notions

of competency, and will spend his life in toil and self-denial, to accumulate what he never enjoys, and though he care not who may be his heir. If it be the honours of rank: a loftier title, a higher place in the senate, a star, a riband, are of mighty influence in the hands of government. And the possessor of intellectual and moral faculties will often value such things for their own sake, and not as badges of merit or good service;—nay, will sometimes think success in gaining them the atonement for meanness and knavery in their pursuit. And the thoughtless world will chime in, to give countenance to the lie. But this ambition which aims at mere personal display, is as vulgar, and calls into action no higher faculty of man's nature, than the rivalry of dress in humbler walks of life. That its ends, when attained, add nothing to a man's true dignity or happiness, is but a preacher's truism. They may increase the pomp of worldly circumstance, and buy the cheap incense of flattery; but they neither ensure the respect of self, nor the esteem of others. They are no food to the soul. They cannot cover its nakedness, in a life separate from the material.

The misery of indolence,—the eagerness of endeavour so often devoted to frivolities,—shows that man has an original and urgent tendency to press forward to something which he is not, and to be seeking something which he has not. The

strength of this disposition is wonderful, when it is contrasted with the physical weakness of human nature. One who can neither perceive the disease which lurks within him, nor shake off the slight malady of a day, can put forth an energy of will, and carry out a course of conduct, which may perpetrate atrocious crimes. The victim of an aching pain may deluge kingdoms with blood, for the gratification of his rude ambition and savage lust of power. And these are they whom the world, in its half-civilized ages, calls great. It honours with the title not those who have devoted their great powers in the cause of duty, to the advancement of freedom and civilization, and the welfare of mankind; much less a Howard, whose patience and strength of will were devoted to the alleviation of suffering; but such as, with lower mental endowments than a Howard,—say what they will of his dulness—have led subject hosts to wholesale carnage, have been willing to sacrifice the happiness of thousands, and the interests of the whole species, to the aggrandizement of self; and have gained for themselves an empty name, a splendid robe, a circle of flatterers, and a tomb. There are eternal elements in human nature; but in this greatness there is nothing enduring, except its frequent crimes. Nothing is truly great, but what is eternal in its tendencies. Truth, justice, honour, mercy,—these stand in close rela-

tion to the Eternal Attributes of the Highest, and look to a destiny beyond the finite and perishable. The love of God and man is above human praise, and superior to disappointment and weariness. Its work is in time, but its aim is in the Infinite Beyond.

Thus, in the constitution of his own soul, man may read the prophecy of an immortal destiny, and may learn to direct his aspirations to Him Who is for ever and ever. His temples to his own honour, are shivered to atoms by a single spark within the soul. "Alexandre, si célèbre dans les histoires par ses illustres brigandages, entendait quelquefois dans le plus secret de sa raison les mêmes reproches que les assassins et les voleurs, malgré le bruit confus des flatteurs qui l'envirronnaient; et César, au passage du Rubicon, ne put s'empêcher de faire connaître que ces reproches l'épouvantaient, lorsqu'il se résolut enfin de sacrifier à son ambition la liberté de sa patrie [6]."

Conclusion.

Is it likely then, after nineteen centuries of Christianity, that the world will now retrograde to atheism, and the aspirations of the immortal spirit seek satisfaction in the conceits of a positive philosophy? An array of facts and a digest of laws were beggarly elements for the soul, if they were

[6] Malebranche.

the only food of its intellect and its feelings. It will ever strive to soar higher, in spite of every attempt to bind it down. It cannot be satisfied with statistics and calculations, till it shall have laid aside its most generous faculties and desires. The materialist would scoff at its feelings, and question its moral obligations; he would interdict every region of truth, beyond the appearances of sensation; and, regarding man as but a machine of finely-moulded clay, would confine his intellectual occupation to the work suitable to a machine. Nature has not made man the automaton which his case requires, and he would have him curtail himself to an automaton. Facts are at variance with his theory, but so much the worse for the facts. They must give way to the theory: though to change them, is to change the whole nature and constitution of man. But the soul recoils from a tyranny more presumptuous than any which has sought to bind it in fetters. It takes pleasure in observing facts and laws; but can thus engage only a portion of its powers, and these neither the loftiest nor the most inquisitive. Its moral powers have no sphere of exertion in the investigation of mechanical causes: its feelings may be chilled and dead through inaction, though it should have gone back, by its intellect, from cause to cause, till the whole universe has been resolved into its ultimate forces.

The soul cannot reconcile itself to the notion, that countless and complicated designs, which extend far beyond its own power of observing them, and are at length discovered only through the refined contrivances and intricate calculations of science, are, after all, mere appearances of design and no work of a designer. It cannot conceive the possibility, that the many combinations and adjustments, by which the world is adapted to the physical condition of its inhabitants, are all alike the happy results of the happy concourse of atoms. But this is only the beginning of its difficulty. Man is the wonder of creation. "In earth there is nothing great but man, in man there is nothing great but mind." Such, however, is not the doctrine of the atheist. He must rob the mind of every thing that makes it great; that chance—a word without objective meaning—may create from atoms the mental as well as the physical universe.

The sense of the marvellous and beautiful are feelings against which he must be on his guard, or they will certainly lead him into error. They find, however, their corresponding objects in nature, and are the source of much happiness in life. The benevolent affections too must be watched; but they are a fortunate endowment for man, the offspring of atoms and chance; for since many men have accidentally sprung to life, it is convenient that they possess some disposition to live together

in society. The domestic affections are very dangerous: and since it is difficult to console a bereaved mother by telling her that so many infants die of every hundred; and since feelings so strong may be a foundation for inferences unfavourable to atheism; it will be well to adopt some social scheme, which will separate the child from the parent and conceal the parent from the child. It is somewhat unfortunate to any theory to be opposed to the strongest feelings of the heart, and those which bring the purest and best joys of life; still more unfortunate, when it must assume that nature, which has generally been so happy in her plans, has, in her accidental arrangements for the propagation of her various species, ordered that the inferior animals shall be guided by strong natural instincts to protect their young, and left man to learn, by his distinctive faculty of reason, that such instincts are not to guide himself, and that, though he possesses them, nature might have contrived better.

But the moral nature of man;—we will suppose the atheist to be a moralist. Suppose him to allow that he is endowed with affections, as well as with a calculating and logical faculty, and finds among them a conviction that he ought to do this and to leave that undone. But his *ought* can mean no more than that he should gratify and cultivate good taste, and raise himself above the vulgarity

of wrong-doing; that he should indulge and develope his benevolent affections and his love of order. He may admit that human nature, in its best phases, is endowed with certain moral tastes and tendencies and dispositions. But we must not examine them too closely. We must not ask,—'Who constituted us thus?' The theist takes a more comprehensive view of human life and the larger sphere which embraces it. He finds that many distinct particulars combine to make life, what reason will regard it, a state of moral trial. He exists here in a world which conceals the Creator from his immediate vision. Such a constitution of things is essential to probation. For faith is dependence on the Invisible; and the field of human life is the scene of difficulties to be encountered and temptations to be overcome. Its sufferings are correspondent to moral evil. They teach him that sorrow is to be expected in a sinful world, while they call forth energy and effort, and furnish new kinds of probation. In himself he finds faculties adapted to the world he inhabits, and, at the same time, capable of working together for one end, as if to acquit himself well were the chief end of life. His whole nature is adapted to a state of probation. He has an originating will and power of choice; intelligence to direct him in the preference; moral feelings, which act as motives; moral judgments, as correctives. He is impelled

to action by the misery of indolence; his sense of the marvellous and beautiful excites curiosity and desire; his sense of justice and goodness gives powerful incentives to exertion. And his character is dependent on his conduct. The neglect and abuse of his powers bring certain degradation, and rob the soul of its best endowments.

The feelings of the soul thus direct man to the Creator, and furnish indications of His Character. The sense of the marvellous is impressed by the manifestations of Infinite Power. The perception of design, the love of order, the delight found in the simplicity of principles and the unity of laws, are susceptible to the manifestations of Infinite Wisdom. The happiness which is dependent on the designs of Providence; that which springs from the feelings and perceptions of the soul; its delight in the true, the beautiful, the good,—in physical or moral beauty; these awaken it to the contemplation of Infinite Goodness.

Again he is capable of religious feelings, and he finds himself in a state of being which draws them into action. He is moved to adoration by the grandeur and vastness of creation; to reverence by the moral intuition of a Lawgiver, Whose Nature can be the only Fountain of Eternal Holiness. His preservation in feebleness, his life of dependence, suggest the feeling of dependence and gratitude.

But can he look to God as a Father, and love Him with filial affection? Upon this question must depend the free exercise of all his religious feelings. He may hope the best from a Creator Whose Love is over all His works; but what can he expect from the sin within himself, which he feels to be his own work? Nature without revelation affords him but an uncertain answer. The immensity of the universe, its vast plans, the profusion of suns which adorn the night, the long, unfailing constancy of material processes, may move him to a silent and wistful dread of the unchangeableness of Divine Justice, in moral plans as vast and stedfast as those of nature[7]. There is much waste in creation, as far as man can understand it: many seeds ripen but to rot, many creatures die before they have well begun to live. May there not be such waste among the suns of the firmament? for a sun, to Infinite Power, is but as the seed of a little flower of the earth. The moon appears to be a barren and useless rock, and, in her feeble light, we may find but an inadequate purpose of her existence. We cannot know that this is true: it is possible that nothing may be useless; every thing in creation may be subservient to important ends. But it is otherwise, as far as our knowledge can go of the world we live in.

[7] The following passage stands as it was written before the publication of "The Plurality of Worlds."

May there not be a like waste in the moral creatures of the universe? May it not here also be possible that many are brought into being, few answer the end of their existence?

On this fearful question, revelation alone can give answer. It responds to the feeling of sinfulness, and directs the laden soul to a Saviour. It is under the guidance of revelation, that the feelings and faculties have found their highest and best expansion. Let them be bound down to the ground, let them be forbidden to soar to God, and they are soon blighted and decay: raise them to the Infinite in perfections, and they are drawn out, ennobled, and exalted. Quell the aspirations of the spirit, and man is degraded and debased: raise them to an immortal life and destiny, and they find their fit employment, and live in the contemplation of their objects. It is a proof that the feelings and aspirations are the gift of One, Who intends them to be directed to a future life, and to be elevated to Himself.

But what is the meaning of atheism, when it treats conscience as a deceiver, and the moral nature as a delusion? It tells us man is subject to errors and delusions. He is apt to feel that he ought to do this or that, but another may feel exactly the opposite. There is something like a moral law in his nature, which forces itself upon his attention; but there is no written code of its

precepts, and no universal agreement upon them. Weak minds are subject to a mistaken self-reproach, when they think they have done wrong; and a foolish self-approbation, when right. And the law seems to have reference to a Lawgiver and Judge. But resist the law, when it is convenient or desirable; follow what is profitable and pleasant; steel yourself against fanciful feelings, and do what you will; and you soon find conscience to be a deceiver. Its censure and its praise grow weak; its law fades away altogether; the notions of Lawgiver and Judge, are found devoid of all assured reality.

Yes: the characters of the law do indeed die away within the soul: but they die, like the characters on Belshazzar's wall, after they have written the sentence of impending evil. The man has succeeded in moulding his facts to his theory: he has changed his nature and constitution, and may now find in himself no revelation of the Most High. He may now live as he pleases, he may do his will without restraint or fear; till at length the machine is worn out, and the living clay becomes dead clay. Death changes it but little from what it was, and this little is for the better. In life it had much labour in vain; it was ever toiling and scheming; forming plans and following them out; always in restless movement, and for no end: life had nothing to offer which could deserve so

much thought and effort, and the soul in vain strove to rid itself of the feeling of vanity. The clay is no more devoid of purpose than it was before; but it is wiser than it was; for having nothing to do, it is at rest.

But is there no *may-be* to disturb the prospect of repose? The *perhaps*, which is despised in life, may become formidable in death. It would have been wise to act on a possibility. And is not atheism a scheme of endless improbabilities, and even irrational and preposterous? If otherwise, would it not be prudent to trust the feelings of the heart, even though it were found impossible to establish them, on principles of reason and common judgment? If scepticism were the only philosophy, there is enough, even in a chance, to disturb one in the prospect of an unknown future. A man must have been blameless in life; his conscience must be without offence at its close, or it should be an uneasy reflection that after death, there *may be* something more than an eternal sleep. So thought a great interpreter of nature:—

> "For in that sleep of death what dreams *may* come
> Must give us pause."

Theism finds a purpose in life which takes account of all the facts of consciousness, and has employment for all the feelings of the heart. The soul which feels, though it can neither reason nor calculate, may be moved by the beauties of nature,

or may gaze with awe on the sublimities of the star-lit sky; and in these feelings which are the revelation of God in man, may find the conviction to be spontaneous and inevitable;—This material universe is the garment by which God is seen, it is the veil which hides Him from the sight. But when it looks from the world to its people, and observes their various faculties, and their mutual relations, and perceives how all things combine to one great purpose of human life,—and that a purpose so consistent with the truth which it had learnt from the material world alone;—then it is that the accumulated evidence is irresistible.

In this purpose every energy obtains its action, every feeling its object, every aspiration is satisfied, and man fulfils his manifest destiny. The soul which is at one with God, finds that confusion to cease within itself, which reigns every where in the world. Peace and pure joy are his, and the harmonious action of his powers in one course of duty, and for one great end,—to know God, and to dwell eternally in His kingdom.

He is to that soul the Fountain of Being, the Pervading Spirit, the Author of sublimity and beauty, the Eternal Law of truth and right. He is Himself its hope and its reward. He has given it all it enjoys in this world, and He can give "greater things than these." He can give a more perfect nature, more refined senses, more noble

powers, more excellent faculties of enjoyment; and, with them, their corresponding objects, in a glorious and immortal life.

The best joys of earth are tempered with sadness; the gentler feelings are often offended; the intense affections, the self-sacrificing love, oft crushed and wounded to the ground. It is because man is capable of feelings, which life can never satisfy. But in God they have rest and satisfaction. He is known by them as Perfect Beauty, and Perfect Holiness, and Perfect Love. In Him all holy and good affections have their proper blessedness. He is the Portion of the virtuous and loving soul; the Keeper of all worthy objects, which may be torn from it in the world.

"Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all."

APPENDIX.

ON CAUSALITY.

Conception of cause or power.

1. THE question respecting the origin and meaning of the notions of cause and effect, and of the law of Causality,—*Every change must have a cause*,— is soon perceived, by every one who thinks at all, to be a most vital question of philosophy, and as important as any that can divide one system from another.

Causality is represented by Hume and others as a mere subjective notion of the mind, without validity in the external world. We are conscious, they argue, of the representations of successive phænomena in the mind, but can never see any connecting link which binds one to another, nor observe any thing in any succession of appearances, to give us the idea of power or necessary connexion. Experience discovers that certain events are conjoined in the same particular order of succession, as when motion is communicated by the impact of

Appendix. one billiard ball upon another. This frequent association of experience is, after all, but a certain order of successive events, and does not warrant our giving an objective signification to the notion of power as the connexion between things external to us.

To this reasoning it has been answered by many writers [1], that if it were true we could never have possessed the conception of a cause at all. It is a self-evident fact, that we have the idea not only of consecutiveness, but of *cause* or *power*, a notion which, however it may have been got, certainly contains something more than the notion of succession.

We may consider separately the questions:—

I. What is the meaning of the causal law, and whether it be universally received as a principle of judgment?

II. What is the origin of the conception of a cause; and what warrant have we for regarding the causal law as objectively valid in the universe?

[1] Thus Kant, Rein. Vern. p. 698. "The very conception of a cause so manifestly contains the conception of a necessity of connexion with an effect, . . . that it would be altogether lost, if, with Hume, we were to derive it from a frequent association of consecutive events, and a custom thence arising (consequently a merely subjective necessity) of connecting representations." See also Reid, p. 446.

SECTION I.

CAUSALITY A UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT.

Permanence of nature.

2. The causal law, when properly stated and understood, is, and must be, a universal law of judgment. But it is subject to frequent misconceptions. Thus it is sometimes represented as an instinctive belief that the future will resemble the past[2], or that the laws of nature will continue permanent, as known to man. This is to make the law of causality responsible for that with which it has nothing to do. We have, in fact, no such conviction of the permanence of nature. That there must be a certain permanence of phænomena in time, we have seen to be a necessary condition of experience; but it is not necessary that we should expect this permanence beforehand, much less that we should have an intuitive conviction of it. The mind is glad enough to pick up the knowledge which nature gives it, and needs no such anticipation. Nor is there any known neces-

[2] Mr. Lewis (Hist. Phil., vol. iv. p. 51) ascribes this statement of the law to Reid, and it must be admitted that, in his first work, he does not sufficiently discriminate between the laws of nature and the law of causality. Yet even here he speaks (p. 198) of "an original principle by which we *believe and expect* the continuance of the course of nature." In his "Intellectual Powers," (p. 451,) he lays it down as a principle, that "in the phænomena of nature what is to be will *probably* be like to what has been." But he presently enunciates the causal law in very different terms (p. 455). "Whatever begins to exist *must* have a cause which produced it."

Appendix. sity for the continuance of the laws of nature. Any hour might prove the expectation to be erroneous. We believe indeed that the sun will rise to-morrow, and living men walk the earth, as to-day; but to affirm that it cannot be otherwise, is to assume, beyond the law of causality, that we know all the causes of universal being.

But the causal law is independent of the laws of nature. If the sun should fail to rise to-morrow, if another day should even resolve the material universe into atoms, and discover to the wondering gaze every atom to be a living being, it would still be true that every change must have a cause. Whatever may befal the known laws of nature,—whether it contain the causes of change within itself, or be influenced by some superior nature,—though its laws should change from the stability of ages to perpetual change, till perception gave us pictures as transient and unconnected as the changes of a kaleidoscope; though it should change so rapidly as even to make all perception impossible, yet it would still be true that every change must have its cause.

Our knowledge of the laws of nature is, in truth, no more than empirical. Experience enables us to calculate the results in the concussion of two billiard balls. That a certain substance, which we call ivory, is elastic, and retains its elasticity, is an induction from innumerable examples. But if the

results of concussion are seen to be changed, while the balls and the circumstances of motion remain the same, we have then an application of the causal law; and are compelled, by an irresistible necessity, to ascribe the change of elasticity to some cause, whether internal to the ball or external.

A First Cause.

3. *Whether internal or external* to the subject of change. This brings us to another common misapprehension of causality, which makes it inconsistent with freewill, and with a First Cause of creation. The cause of the mind's volitions is the mind itself; the Cause of all subordinate being is the Self-existent Being. If it be argued that we want a previous cause of the mind's determination, and a previous cause of that cause, and so on to infinity; and if similar reasoning be extended to the volitions, or to the existence of the Creator, it is a sufficient reply that this is to press the law of causality beyond its sphere. It excludes the possibility of origination from nothing, but cannot preclude a self-originating power of living beings, whether created or uncreate.

A principle of judgment.

4. Another misapprehension of the law of causality furnishes an objection which has been often confuted, especially in the controversies on innate ideas. The law cannot be universal, it is sometimes argued, because few men even under-

Appendix. stand it, and most men require much explanation and argument before they will give it their assent. Thus a recent writer [3] informs us that he had met with an intelligent student of chymistry, whom he had found it impossible to convince that the law is universally true.

This remark involves the notion, that an instinctive belief must be impressed upon the mind in the English tongue. But the mind may unconsciously be bound by a principle of judgment, of which it never becomes cognizant, though it cannot contravene it in any particular case. Most men would require a good deal of explanation to convince them that sensation, without intelligence, could never give perception; but it is not the less a universal law of mind. Many principles and processes of the mind are brought, with difficulty, within the compass of reflective thought; there may be others which lie wholly beyond its reach; some, perhaps, which could not be expressed in words, nor even made intelligible to human faculties.

Universally received.

5. That every event, every change, every commencement must have a cause, and every series of causes must either be without limitation, or must depend upon an absolute First Cause, itself un-

[3] Mr. Lewis, Hist. Phil., iv. p. 131.

caused, and cannot have originated in nothing, is seen to be the universal judgment of men, as soon as it is understood. It expresses what all feel and cannot help feeling. It meets us under various forms. It is sometimes stated generally of all finite existence, in such terms as 'Ex nihilo nihil fit,' 'Something exists, therefore something must always have existed,' 'If, at any previous time, there had been absolute nothingness, there must always have been absolute nothingness.' Even the atheist assents to the principle, and has recourse to an infinite chain of finite causes, to shelter his unavoidable convictions from the only possible alternative of a self-originating cause. Appendix.

Or to take a humbler example. A stone is known as an inert mass, which never moves but to some external force. But suppose we were to see a stone rise from the ground and fly through the air, apparently of its own accord. This would be contrary to all known laws of nature, but it is conceivable. Every man possessed of the common faculties of thought would be sure that the stone had moved in obedience to some invisible cause, whether external to it or internal. A student of chymistry would be a wonderful, intellectual alchymist, if he could conceive it possible for a stone to move without internal or external cause of its motion, whether it were on earth, or in the moon, or in any region of the universe.

APPENDIX. We conclude, then, that the law of causality is universally received as a subjective principle of knowledge.

SECTION II.

OBJECTIVE VALIDITY OF THE LAW OF CAUSALITY.

Known existence implies causation.

6. The important question remains, What warrant have we for ascribing an objective meaning to our subjective law? How can we know our conception of power, and of the connexion of events by power, to be not mere notions, but to belong really to the outward world. And if they do apply objectively, how are we to account for the coexistence of an objective law of being with a subjective law of thought, both of universal application?

First, then, How do we know that the mental conception of cause corresponds to something real and external to the mind, and that the mental law of causality is true in its application to the external world? The answer is, that we know it from that ultimate fact of perception which is the foundation of all knowledge. We have precisely the same warrant for considering the notion of cause or power to be something real in the outward world, as for considering that the outward world exists at all. The one knowledge carries the other along with it. The one is implied in the other.

The notion of cause or power is obtained, in the

first instance, by observing the operation of our own minds, and the effects of their action in the world without. When the hand strikes a billiard ball and sets it in motion, the mind has, in the words of Sir John Herschel, "a distinct and immediate personal consciousness" of its exertion. But the same act which discovers the power of the mind, discovers that of the outward world to produce sensation. The hand moves the billiard ball, the ball causes feeling in the hand; the mind has an immediate apperception of opposing powers, which gives it an immediate cognition of the existence of itself and the world in mutual relation. There is here no arbitrary transference of the power of the mind to the outward world. The two are co-ordinate, and the mind has precisely the same warrant for concluding that there is power or force external to it, as that it possesses power of its own.

But it is discovered yet farther, upon attention, that the feeling produced by the ball striking the hand is only one of several impressions, by which alone the ball is known as an existing thing. If it be touched, it produces a certain impression of smoothness or roughness, which varies in different bodies. Similarly it gives the perception of some colour through the eye. It is only in these perceptions, and by means of them, that the external body is known to exist at all. And in every one

Appendix. of them, it is discovered as something in action and reaction with the powers of the mind or self.

It is true that the external body is, in no case, the sole cause, but only one of several causes of the particular perception. The sensation always depends upon the properties of the nerves, and often upon several external causes. But since it is found in experience,—what is essential to all experience,—that to the same mind, and through the same nerve, the sensations vary with the various outward occasions, it becomes allowable to consider the external body as the cause of the mental perception. It is when the mind finds the causes of its different sensations diverging from one body, that it spontaneously gains the notion of an object; just as the eye sees the image of a luminous point in the position from which the rays of light diverge after reflection or refraction. It may be one great use of double organs to assist the mind when it is learning to perceive.

Or, to take another example: The fire burns my finger to-day. Suppose I should touch it without injury to-morrow. The fire is then no longer what it was to me. If other observations prove that my sensibility remains the same, it is evident that the fire has undergone some change of its properties. But it is still perceived as a luminous object. It was known before as a cause which affected both the sight and the touch. It is now

known as a cause which affects the former sense alone. But suppose the laws of nature change farther, and the fire cease also to be visible or in any way discoverable. To me then it ceases to exist. As long as an object exists it is known as the cause of certain sensations; and when no longer known as a cause, it is no longer known as an existing thing. Appendix.

Thus the conception of power is implied in that of existence, and gives it the only meaning we can attach to it. In investigating the origin of our cognitions of the mind and the world, and attempting to go back from the present experience to its first causes, it appears that the notion of power is the ultimate point that we can reach. Whether the mind analyse its present perceptions, or look back to the commencement of its spontaneous life, this notion may be said to be the very first principle of intelligent consciousness, and to correspond to the ultimate element which intelligence can attain to in all consciousness.

7. Thus, in the relation between the mind and the world, the law of causality is of universal application, and signifies that in the sphere of empirical knowledge the mind can perceive things only in relation to itself. It also holds good in the relation between different bodies in the outward world of experience. It is a law of being as well True in the world of experience.

Appendix. as a law of thought. The external world is known as possessed of certain properties or powers, which may communicate their potencies from one body to another, and so effect the various movements and changes discovered in experience. If the billiard ball strike another ball instead of the hand, it either strikes with the same force, so that the difference of the effect is owing to the body which is struck; or else it possesses the faculty of acting with a change of disposition towards different substances. That material bodies possess no such faculty cannot be concluded from the law of causality. It is experience which discovers that some substances retain their constant properties and powers, and, when they come into collision, or are brought within the conditions of chymical agency, strike or act with constant impartiality and uniformity. But it must follow from the causal law, that a body which can act with different forces or affinities under the same mechanical or chymical conditions, and without external cause of its change of disposition, must be moved to action by some power internal to itself, which would manifestly be equivalent to assigning it the chief faculty of a living being.

True beyond experience. 8. But the causal law cannot be restricted to the world of experience. It may be affirmed with certainty to hold good in a world, which, from the

rapid succession of its changes, could not fall within the observation of the senses. In such a world the *materials* of knowledge would be wanting. The mind would remain in darkness, not from any incapacity of its own, but from the want of organs sufficiently quick and delicate. Causality is not only a condition of sensation, it is also a principle of thought, and must be held applicable to every form of being, which could be brought within the comprehension of the mind. It extends to every change or commencement, but cannot be considered to govern the agency of a first or self-originating cause. Hence when it is said to be of universal application, it must still be limited to the universe of the knowable. To interdict its application to the motives of the mind or of the Deity, is to affirm that their internal nature is incomprehensible. It may be said, no doubt, that the internal nature of matter may also be incomprehensible. But it is equally true, that matter, in its ultimate substratum, or first cause of its existence, may be dependent on the energy of a living mind.

All human knowledge is, in its very nature, subject to the law of causality, which carries it to a First Cause uncaused. That First Cause may thus, like the mind of man, be known to exist, though the manner of His existence transcend the faculties of human nature.

APPENDIX. Origin of the law.

9. The question remains: granted that causality is a universal principle of thought, and has objective application in the world; whence have we gained possession of the universal and necessary judgment—every change must have a cause? How are we to account for the coexistence of a necessary and universal law of being, with a necessary and universal law of thought?

It is evident that we cannot have derived the intellectual principle from common experience, that is, from that observation of the world by the developed mind, which informs us of the ordinary laws and properties by which bodies are known. Common experience can never furnish us with judgments, which carry along with them the conviction of universality and necessity. It tells us *what is* in certain cases, but can never tell us *what is universally*, nor *what must be of necessity*. That the sensibility of the mind and the properties of the nervous organism remain, for the most part, the same in different perceptions, are facts of experience. That beings exist under the two classes of mind and matter, of which the one originates motion, the other only transmits it, —that of external objects, some, like the perceiving mind, show powers of acting with intelligence, while others act with the uniformity of mechanical causation, are also truths of experience. But that every change must have a cause is prior

to all experience. The mind can discover it to be prior not only to the existence of matter, but even to its own existence. So far is it from being a mere subjective property of the intelligence. It is an objective property of that world of possible experience in which the mind finds itself to exist, but in which it can discover no necessity of its own existence.

It follows then that the old dogma,—"*Nihil in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*," cannot be true. Nor does it appear that the addition of Leibnitz—"*nisi ipse intellectus*," is sufficient to account for the facts of causality. For that which belongs originally to the intellect itself, can be no more than a law of pure thought. It has no objective significancy. This principle does not even assure the mind of the reality of what it receives through the senses. It shuts us up within the subjective consciousness, and gives no passage to the outward world.

The complete solution of the question we may anticipate to be impossible. Common perception is itself a mystery. There must be some adaptation between matter and mind to make it possible. The coexistence of the subjective with the objective law of causality, may itself be a part of that original adaptation. If it be considered an original law of thought, it must be considered also an original law of being, in virtue of which it

Appendix. becomes cognizable. But it is not necessary to assume the coexistence of distinct original laws. The subjective law, though not derived from experience, may yet be a result of that communion between mind and matter in every perception, which gives rise to experience.

Beyond that province of the mind's operations which lies within the reach of our reflective attention, the mind not only possesses certain innate powers, but spontaneously applies them in its intercourse with the world; and is able, by means of them, to draw inferences and to acquire cognitions. Of these the cognition of power, or causality, is the earliest that can be traced. It is not obtained from the habitual observation of consecutive events. Causality is not a mere notion, it is a cognition. It has not been derived from experience, but has arisen in that prior communication between mind and matter, in which perception and common experience have their foundations. The mind emerges from that *primary experience* to the common experience of life, already possessed of the knowledge that there is an existing self, and an existing world; and that existence, in either of them, shows itself in properties or in actions, that is, under various forms of power.

The objective law of causation becomes a subjective law in the same primary experience. Ob-

jective causes awaken the mind to its life of observation and thought in their own world of properties and powers, but cannot give it the faculty of comprehending an existence which is not subject to causality. The world of possible knowledge is a world of properties and powers; and it is in this world that the law of causality is universally and necessarily true. The law can carry us but a single step beyond the world of change. It may assure us that either it has existed eternally in all its potencies, or has been originated by a Power superior to all causality—a Power unchangeable and eternal. It may assure us that all the powers or potencies of every state of finite existence, unless continually derived from a Superior Being, must have been contained in every preceding state. It may carry us to an Uncaused First Cause, containing eternally in Himself the powers and potencies of all being. It can neither fathom the Depths of His Existence, nor search the Motives of His Operation.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries
1 1012 01247 4294